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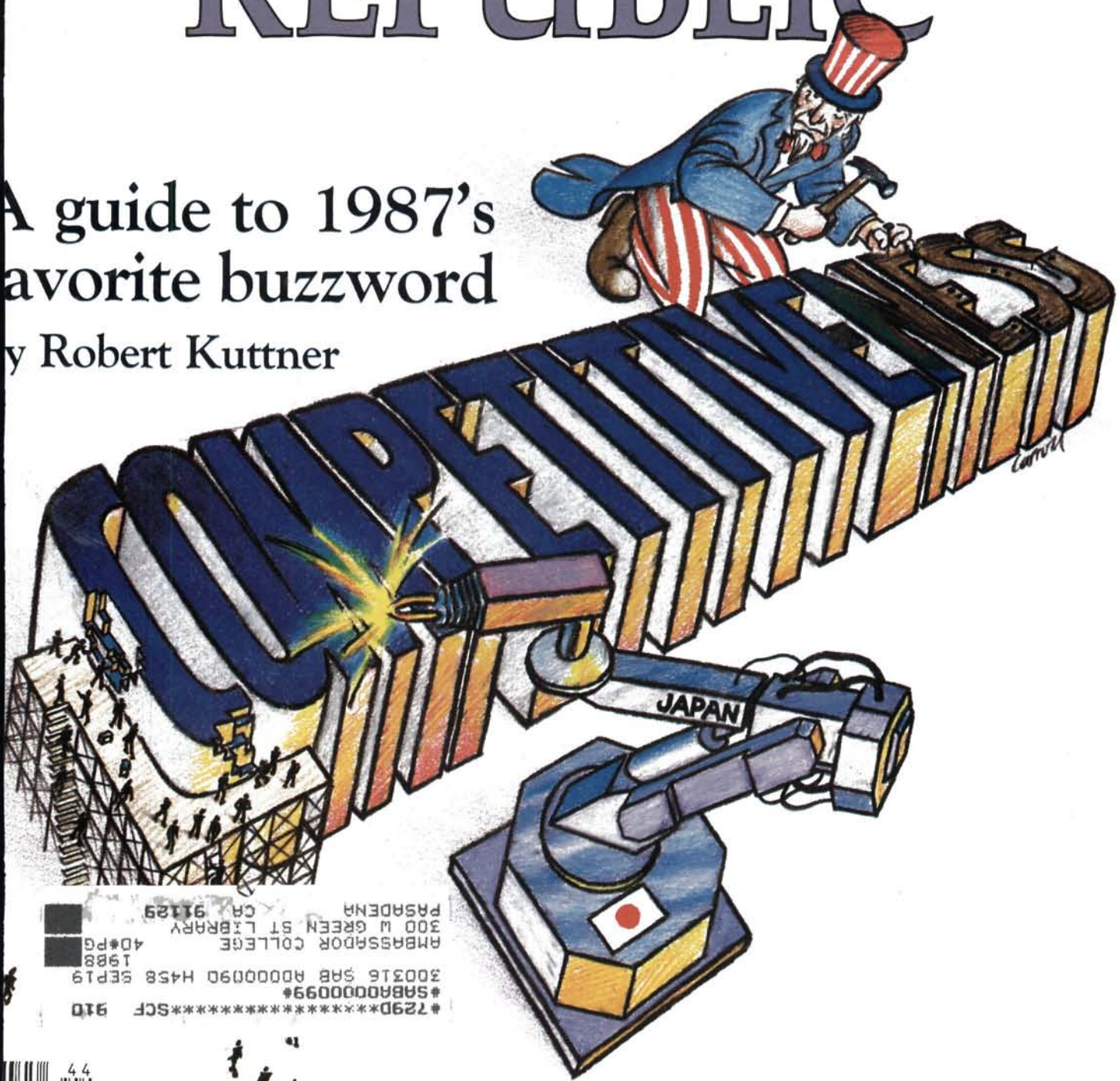

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FROM WASHINGTON

POLLYANNA AND CASSANDRA

October marked "the 59th month of economic recovery and expansion, thereby setting the record as the longest U.S. peacetime expansion since World War II," brag the Republican members of the Joint Economic Committee. "America boasts the highest production, employment, and income figures ever recorded." Unemployment is way down (ads begging for workers have become commonplace), inflation and interest rates have barely edged up, leading indicators are positive. The stock market lurches nervously and drifts down a bit, but resists its long-predicted "major readjustment."

It's hard to argue with success. Pollyanna says we're headed for more of the same. After five years of shrieking, "This can't last," Cassandra is getting hoarse and losing her credibility. Yet she persists. And a mere cyclical recession is not in her script. She predicts calamity.

In the October *Atlantic*, investment-banking Brahmin Peter G. Peterson writes the standard Cassandra scenario. He focuses on the trade deficit as an expression of America's preference for consumption over savings and investment. Last year we spent 3.5 percent more than we produced, and borrowed the rest from abroad. The extra money didn't go for higher investment that will pay for itself. We invest less in our society than our lenders do in their own. The money was spent on increased consumption.

According to Peterson, the average American worker consumes $3,100 more a year in goods and services than at the beginning of the Reagan era. About $1,000 of that came from genuine economic growth. The rest came either from foreign borrowing or from lower domestic investment, which of course will reduce future growth.

Foreigners won't finance our lifestyle forever. At some point, to pay off our debts, we've got to start producing more than we consume—or, in Peterson's gloomier formulation, consuming less than we produce. By Peterson's math, a stagnant or declining standard of living for the next decade or so is inevitable. The only question is whether we put ourselves on a rigorous diet, using the savings to pay off the foreigners and invest for a productive future, or starve in a worldwide economic cataclysm set off by our own piggery.

Left-wing economist Robert Heilbroner, writing in the September 14 *New Yorker*, shares Peterson's analysis of our foreign debt, but goes further. Heilbroner sees the trade deficit as just a symptom of the collapse of imperialistic capitalism. The prosperity of advanced nations, he argues, has always depended on taking more out of the underdeveloped world than they put in. World trade was fine for us when we had all the industry and poor countries had only raw materials and handicrafts to sell. But now that progress in transportation and communication has made it possible to locate advanced technology in low-wage countries, a society like ours doesn't have much to bring to market.

Then there's Ravi Batra, author of the best-selling book *The Great Depression of the 1990s*. To the stew of despair Batra adds a theory of 30- and 60-year cycles (since we avoided a 1930s-style collapse in the 1960s, we're due for one in the 1990s), and a bit of spiritual analysis from an Indian guru whose followers dance with human skulls, among other rituals. Batra contends that the increased concentration of wealth causes economic instability by increasing the number of shaky bank loans to the poor and speculative investments by the rich.

So who's right, Pollyanna or Cassandra? Pollyanna loses a few points for misrepresentation. The oft-repeated phrase "longest peacetime recovery" is designed to exclude the eight-year expansion from 1961 to 1969, during Vietnam. But economically, this has been wartime, with a military buildup equivalent to Vietnam. The previous "peacetime" record, which we just passed, was the late 1970s—hardly thought of now as a period of wondrous prosperity, and yet an expansion that surpassed the current one in terms of real growth.

Cassandra also loses a few points for letting dyspepsia cloud her vision. The common argument that our trouble is a

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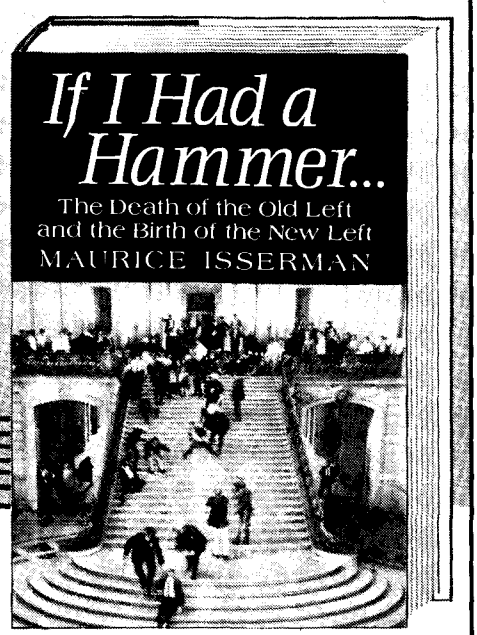

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THE STORY BEHIND RECENT HEADLINES

What do the following major front-page news events of the past year have in common?

- The loss of 31 lives aboard the U.S.S. Stark, attacked accidentally by an Iraqi warplane.
- The U.S. reflagging and escorting of Kuwaiti ships in the Persian Gulf.
- The staggering U.S. trade deficit, which reached its highest point in history this year.

The answer is oil. All of these events resulted in large part from our heavy dependence on foreign oil. Yet despite all the attention to these symptoms, we are not attacking the disease of foreign oil dependence itself. Instead we're becoming more hooked on it.

The Problem With Oil

The major oil problem is that most of the world's supply belongs to other countries.

- Almost two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves lie under the nations of the Persian Gulf.
- The U.S. controls only about 4.6 percent of the world's oil reserves, but we still use more than 25 percent of the world's annual production.
- From 1976 to 1986, we paid $640 billion for foreign oil, or about one-fourth the cost of all our imports.
- Last year the U.S. imported 6 million barrels of oil per day, an increase of more than 1 million barrels per day over 1985.

The Electric Solution

The solution to our growing oil addiction is the same as it was after the 1973/74 Arab oil embargo – to use energy more efficiently and to turn to more electricity generated by our own abundant sources.

Since the embargo, electricity has helped us cut the use of foreign oil and, at the same time, has fueled our economic recovery and growth. Heavy industries, businesses, and even homes are turning away from burning oil to increased reliance on electric systems.

Society is in a transition from an age dominated by oil to an age of electricity. In 1986 we used almost 40 percent more electricity than we did in 1973. This past summer, utilities across the country reported record electric usage they had not expected for years to come. Those new supplies of electricity have come almost entirely from coal and nuclear energy.

The Role of Nuclear Energy

Nuclear energy is now the second largest source of our electricity after coal. In just 30 years, more than 100 nuclear power plants have been licensed to operate in 32 states. As these plants were switched on, older plants, mainly using oil, were set aside for backup service. In 1986, our nuclear plants produced the electricity equivalent of 2 million barrels of oil a day.

With 13 plants still being built, nuclear energy will be the nation's fastest growing source of electricity for the rest of this decade. And public attitude research indicates the American public is counting on nuclear energy – 80 percent believe nuclear energy will be important in meeting our electricity needs in the years ahead, and 77 percent believe our need for nuclear energy will grow.

But nuclear energy's future growth is in doubt. Financial, political and regulatory uncertainties are preventing utilities from planning any new baseload power plants. At its current growth rate, electricity demand will overtake our reliable supplies in the early 1990s. So we should be planning new electric plants now. But with very few exceptions, we are not.

What will happen? First, we will be forced to switch back on the old oil-fired plants which our coal and nuclear electric generation had pushed into standby service. Then, utilities will order and build the plants that can be put up fastest and cheapest – which means even greater use of oil and more expensive electricity because of high fuel costs.

As a result, we are headed toward greater dependence on foreign oil during the time when international tensions over oil are higher than ever.

Coal and nuclear energy baseload power plants, by themselves, may not solve the tensions in the Mideast and other oil-related problems. But they helped us and the rest of the world overcome the energy crises of the 1970s, and they can help prevent even more economic and also military crises in the 1990s and beyond – crises that will inevitably occur if the world continues competing for Persian Gulf oil instead of turning to the alternatives that are at hand. The result could mean a Persian Gulf stranglehold on U.S. economic strength and on our security.

Harold B. Finger
President and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Council For Energy Awareness

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CORRESPONDENCE

SIMON SAYS

To the editors:
A word of clarification on two items in Fred Barnes's continued good coverage of the presidential races ("Pee-Wee's Big Adventure," October 5): First, while I strongly advocate a public service jobs program, I do not believe that it alone can solve our unemployment and productivity problems. Private sector job creation must be the major tool, and the federal government can encourage that more than it now is. Second, my statement that I was Albanian was made in jest. I would be proud to claim that heritage, but unfortunately I cannot.

PAUL SIMON
Washington, D.C.

GERMAN DUALISM

To the editors:
In "Deutschland Uber Allies" (September 28), Christopher Layne assumes that the division of Germany is perpetuated only by the two Germanys' association with the superpower blocs. But there are other equally serious obstacles to reunification. One is the absence of a consensus on the domestic political and social character of a reunited Germany. How does one merge a healthy, liberal Western democracy with a relatively stable, economically successful Soviet satellite? Another obstacle to German unity is East Germany's unambiguous rejection of reunification. For the GDR to take part in a dialogue would require a revolution in East Berlin's foreign policy, which to this point has cultivated special economic and political ties to West Germany while stressing the incompatibility of their political systems. Nothing during Honecker's recent West German trip changed this; his stated hope for "normalization" of the inner German border expressed a desire not for reunification, but rather for a normalization of relations. Also, Layne's scenario works on the assumption that the Soviet Union will tolerate "Finlandized" neighbors, which seems improbable. No Soviet leader would allow a country as potentially anti-Soviet as a non-aligned Poland to be the sole buffer between Russia and a united Germany.

HENRY M. RECTOR
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:
I don't know which European public opinion Christopher Layne is referring to, but to my knowledge, as a European, there is no popular support whatsoever for German reunification, outside the Federal Republic itself. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine a single issue more likely to wreck the European Common Market and stop cold any momentum toward political unity among the nations in the Western half of the Continent. A more accurate idea of European sentiment is expressed in the words of that anonymous Frenchman who said, "I love Germany, which is why I'm so happy there are two of them."

PETER J. LYTH
Chevy Chase, Maryland

ON JUDGING BORK

To the editors:
In "The Case Against Bork" (October 5) does TNR recoil from Robert Bork's antimajoritarian view in the "unsurpassed ugliness" quote, or his majoritarianism, where community morals are concerned? These contradictions can only be extracted from articles written in vastly differing contexts, but TNR editors have brought them together in such a way that supports the governing principle: "Bork can't win."

PETER DWIGHT WHITNEY
Inverness, California

To the editors:
It is ironic that in "The Case Against Bork" TNR chooses to argue in exactly the style it is condemning. The editors apparently believe that Bork, in interpreting the Constitution, would hide behind narrow words and miss the broad underlying themes of freedom and individual rights. That's a fair question of anyone who professes "judicial restraint." How does TNR make that case? By picking through a lifetime of writings and focusing mainly on phrases in a 1963 and a 1971 article. The first article appeared in TNR and has been retracted for years. Bork wrote in the 1971 article that he was making no claim to having thoroughly researched and thought through

continued on page 48

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 2, 1987

SAVE CORY

If the battered, intellectually spent Reagan White House is looking for ways to give luster to its final year in office, it could do no better than to lead an urgent public-private-multinational campaign to aid the Philippines. Corazon Aquino needs money—in the form of military aid, debt relief, private investment, and expanded export opportunities—to help save her democracy, which is in peril. It's debatable whether the administration deserves credit for getting democracy started in the Philippines. It has a huge stake, nonetheless, in seeing that democracy survives. So do Democrats in Congress, who insist that the way to fight communism in the world is to conquer poverty and establish justice. Saving Cory needs to be a bipartisan undertaking, but the White House has to mobilize it.

It had better hurry. According to Richard Kessler of the Carnegie Endowment, Washington's top scholar on the Philippines, "The political situation in the Philippines is perilous, with the future of democracy there in doubt." According to Gaston Sigur, the assistant secretary of state in charge of East Asia, "Agitation and violence from both the left and the right threaten the Philippines' democratic revival." Most immediately, Sigur noted, Aquino is threatened by military rightists who staged an attempted coup on August 28. Longer term, democracy is threatened by a Communist insurgency that, according to retired U.S. Gen. Richard Stilwell, is "the one force on the current Philippine scene that has its act together."

As Kessler pointed out in an October 8 Senate hearing, Aquino's own leadership style is partly to blame for the troubles in the Philippines. Unlike her predecessor, Ferdinand Marcos, she has tried to rule as a democrat rather than a dictator, leaving major decisions such as land reform to the newly elected Congress. As a result, she has the reputation of being weak. Partly, Kessler says, she really has been weak. She has been unable to eliminate corruption and has failed to win the confidence of the military. She has sometimes been isolated from her people. During the coup attempt, Kessler said, groups that had supported her against Marcos "stood aside not because they wanted the government overthrown, but because they thought it was the only way they could be heeded."

And yet Aquino is the elected leader of the Philippines. She is a democrat. She is generally popular, as her May 12 congressional election triumph showed, and no other figure—certainly not Ferdinand Marcos, former Defense Minister (and barely elected Senator) Juan Ponce Enrile, or coup leader Col. Gregorio Honasan—can match her support among the population. What's more, remarkable things have happened under Aquino. A constitution has been adopted, a Congress freely elected, and an independent judiciary set up. Monopolies established under Marcos have been broken up. The economy, which fell 13 percent during Marcos's last two years in office, grew 5.1 percent from June 1986 to June 1987.

What Aquino needs is help, both to fight poverty and to improve the military situation. According to Stilwell, a

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former corps commander and chief of staff of U.S. forces in Vietnam, Communist fighters in the Philippines are as numerous (24,000) as the Viet Cong were in 1963, and their political front organization has far more support and freedom to operate. At the moment, he testified at the October 8 hearing, there is no consensus in the Philippine government on how to combat the insurgency, which he said will require "the entire range of government services—political, economic, social, informational, and security—blended and proportioned to meet local needs."

At a purely military level, Stilwell said, there are only 30,000 combat troops in the Philippine armed forces, out of total manpower of 170,000, and even the 30,000 are ill-trained, woefully equipped, and badly led. "The average soldier is not imbued with the imperative that he is the visible symbol of good government in the countryside and the protector and helper of the civilian populous," said Stilwell, who served in the Philippines in the 1950s during President Ramon Magsaysay's successful suppression of the Communist Huk rebellion.

Philippine troops are not issued rations for use in the field; instead, their commanders are given money to buy food. The amounts are inadequate, and the arrangement prevents extended operations. "Medical support is atrocious," Stilwell said. There are no death benefits for soldiers, their equipment and clothing are shoddy, morale is low, and (below the level of Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos) commanders are divided and inept. "Unless and until trends can be changed," he said, "it is predictable that [the Communist Party] will steadily increase its control of the rural areas while concurrently infiltrating and desta-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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4.	THINGS FALL APART	—	1
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6.	THE WHOLE NINE YARDS	4	4
7.	NEARER MY GOD TO ME	*	6
8.	BEDTIME CORY	*	3
9.	WRITERS CRAMPED	—	1
10.	LOX NESS	*	4

1. PECK'S BAD PLOY 1 10

Bork. Was Bork really done in by the Gregory Peck TV spot and the newspaper ads? No, though many Bork opponents are uncomfortable, in retrospect, with the campaign's distortions. Letting the hopeless vote go to the Senate permits a deflating denouement to the conflict. Republicans who think there's political hay to be made down the line, though, are out of touch. Bork lost in the 1986 Senate election results. Next case.

2. WHERE IS THY STINGER? * 14

Gulf. The possibility that the Ayatollah has gotten Stingers from the Afghani rebels highlights a curiosity of public opinion. The U.S. fears and hates the fundamentalists of Iran, and their "fanatic" allies elsewhere; it admires the "freedom fighters" of Afghanistan. Yet it is Islamic fundamentalism that motivates the Afghanis in the first place. Theirs is among the celebrated causes in Islam.

3. THE CRACK OF THE WIMP — 1

Bush. Why is George Bush a wimp, and not, oh, Paul Simon? Bush's celebrated wimp problem has nothing to do with personal courage. Despite his résumé, he's caught in a class stereotype: Bush is an American Bertie Wooster, a tweedy, honking WASP. This group is almost always either evil (e.g., *Pretty in Pink*) or a joke. *Newsweek* did him no favor by portraying his yachtsmanship.

4. THINGS FALL APART — 1

Political entropy. What do the ugly Bork debate, the Arias Nobel Prize, the screaming-mimi White House reporters, the War Powers argument, the Senate's sudden foreign policy mania, and the air of Washington snappishness have in common? Roger Mudd has called it a loss of comity, but in fact it's a rise of entropy. These all intersect at the White House, where nobody's home.

5. LOST HORIZON — 1

Tibet. It is wonderful that Reagan sees Tibet from China's point of view. Tibet's ruination stems not merely from unlucky borders; like Cambodia, it's been wrecked by revolutionary lunatics. Reagan's rhetoric of freedom, never mind his Doctrine, stops where Chinese hegemony begins. Always has. Something to remember next Captive Nations Day.

6. THE WHOLE NINE YARDS 4 4

NFL strike. There was an irony in the gradual dissolution of the NFL strike: the scabs emerged as *victims* of any resolution. Many talented players and improving teams have been earning fan interest and respect. Pulling the plug on them appears unjust. Why? It goes to the heart of fandom, of having one's loyalties jerked around. The strike became an ever uglier spectacle the longer it lasted.

7. NEARER MY GOD TO ME * 6

PTL. Don't the Bakkers know the show-biz adage about leaving 'em laughing? Ludicrous as they appear, they could still maintain a foothold; the precedent is Aimee Semple McPherson. Evangelicals assume sin. Forgiveness, as Pat Robertson observed, is at its heart. PTL's financial burden is another matter. To forgive is human, but to contribute, at this point, probably divine.

8. BEDTIME CORY * 3

Aquino. The slipping Cory Aquino is now in danger of losing her dignity; after that goes respect. Charges that she hid under her bed during the last coup attempt could have been as damaging as the coup itself; inviting the press in to examine the bed, however, was a foolish response. She emerges from such an exchange a potentially comic figure. No one can govern effectively as a laughingstock.

9. WRITERS CRAMPED — 1

Literati. A small group of young New York writers (Bret Easton Ellis and Tama Janowitz are two) have inspired whole trade paperback lines of glitzy, underwritten "Yuppie Fiction." This group's second novels are not being well-received. Some critics are citing too much early success, but there's another dimension. U.S. fiction has long been overpersonalized, often a creative dead end. Few U.S. writers are addressing social concerns.

10. LOX NESS * 4

Curiosa. The big news from the great Loch Ness sonar sweep is that the lake is full of salmon. The question is less why crazies go looking for dinosaurs than why this was as big a story as it was. Nessie joins revivified spiritualism, UFOs, etc., as a popular reflection of political uncertainty in the culture. Happens every time.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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bilizing the urban areas, with metro Manila as the ultimate target."

Meanwhile, despite an economic turnaround, about 50 percent of the population remains unemployed or seriously underemployed. Sixty percent lives below the World Bank's poverty line. Before this year, real incomes had been steadily declining for five years. The country has an external debt of $28 billion, which it takes a third of export earnings to service. Export earnings and foreign aid are up, but the Philippines still pays out more cash than it takes in.

U.S. EXPERTS agree that ultimately it's up to the Filipinos to solve their own problems, and that it's unfair to say that the United States—both the executive branch and Congress—hasn't been eager to support Aquino. Within one hour of the start of the August 28 coup, U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Platt had secured a tough statement from President Reagan and had warned military rebels that under U.S. law all aid to the Philippines would be cut off if Aquino were overthrown. Over the past 18 months, total U.S. aid has been boosted by $350 million and textile quotas have been adjusted to permit increased exports of $100 million. The United States is providing $100 million a year in military aid and just sent $35 million of ammunition, small arms, clothing, and medical supplies.

In spite of all this, according to Representative Stephen Solarz of New York, a lot more ought to be provided. "It defies rational calculation," he said, "that we are providing $3 billion to Egypt and a half billion to Israel every year, and all we've got for the Philippines is $250 to $300 million." What's more, Egypt and Israel are protected from Gramm-Rudman budget cuts, but the Philippines is not, despite its strategic importance, the threats it faces, and the fragility of its democracy. The total administration aid request for fiscal 1988 is $260 million, down from the $374 million being provided this year.

Solarz, chairman of the House subcommittee on Asia, wrestled an additional $100 million over two years out of congressional budgeteers to support land reform, but he thinks the Philippines deserves and requires an additional $500 million to $1 billion per year in aid over the next five years. Senator Alan Cranston, Solarz's counterpart on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has called for a "Marshall Plan for Manila," with an unspecified price tag.

There is some question whether the Philippines could absorb such amounts efficiently, and even bigger questions whether the deficit-conscious U.S. government could afford them. Solarz says that the U.S. stake in the Philippines ought to be deemed great enough to cause Reagan to relent in his opposition to tax increases. There are additional measures that might be taken, such as reprogramming project-based economic assistance to cash grants, so that Aquino can divert resources to the military and build loyalty there. The administration can use the promise of additional money as an incentive to induce reform in the Philippine bureaucracy and military. Reagan could call on the new premier of Japan to join in new guarantees of assistance, investment, debt relief, and increased trade with the Philippines.

The Reagan administration likes to claim credit for fostering democracy in Latin America and Asia, and it actually does deserve more credit than it gets from its critics. In the Philippines, even though Reagan himself was almost terminally late in shifting support from Marcos to Aquino in February 1986, the U.S. bureaucracy had been promoting a shift to democracy for at least two years prior to that. But all of that will be wiped away if Aquino is overthrown. The worldwide trend toward democracy will be undercut if the Philippines slips back into dictatorship. If the military takes over, it will be only a matter of time before the Communists triumph, and that will destroy the Reagan record of having no territory lost to communism on his watch. Those are the stakes in the Philippines. The question is, does the lame-duck administration have the imagination to do something about it?

NOTEBOOK

□ HOT OFF THE PRESSES: "SOVIET HISTORIAN DEFENDS STALIN FOES," the headline. The October 9 Associated Press dispatch from Moscow expanded: "Many of one-time Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's foes were unjustly declared 'enemies of the people,' an eminent Soviet historian said yesterday in the first Soviet authoritative statement on the regime. 'Stalin knew how to use elements of the dictatorship of the proletariat to increase his personal power,' said Yuri A. Polyakov. 'I am convinced those Party and government officials who were declared enemies of the people in the 1930s were not in the main.' " The official, apparently forgetting all this was publicized by Khrushchev in the mid-'50s, went on to say that Sputnik had just been launched, the Brooklyn Dodgers had won the American World Series, and Marilyn Monroe was starring in a new comedy with Jack Lemmon.

□ TAKE THAT, BEN WATTENBERG: TNR is pleased to announce the arrival (in chronological order) of Alexander Miller Dearth (September 14, 10 pounds, 2 ounces), son of publisher Jeffrey Dearth; Lev Menand (September 25, 6 pounds, 10 ounces), son of contributing editor Louis Menand; Sarah Wickenden Weiser (October 3, 6 pounds, 10 ½ ounces), daughter of managing editor Dorothy Wickenden; and Anthony Vincent Zagarri Morley (October 11, 7 pounds, 7 ounces), son of former associate editor Jefferson Morley. The editors would like to thank Ms. Marion Oxford Dearth, Ms. Emily Abrahams, Mr. Benjamin Weiser, and Professor Rosemarie Zagarri for their invaluable contribution. As is our custom with the products of TNR editors, this announcement is in lieu of a review.

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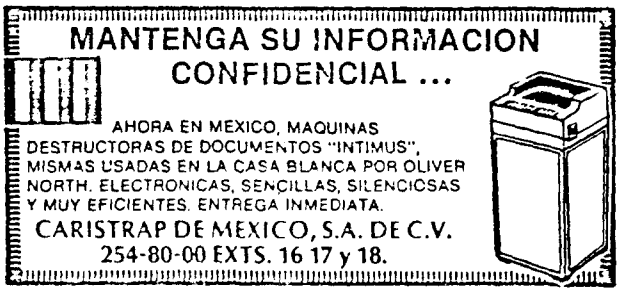
□ OLIVER NORTH, SHREDDER SINCE 1981: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—advertisement in *El Financiero*, Mexico City, September 29
Translation: "Now in Mexico, shredder machines for 'intimate' documents, as used in the White House by Oliver North, electronic, simple, silent and very efficient. Immediate delivery."

(thanks to Lucia Skwarek, Mexico City)

□ STRAIGHT DOPE:

Heterosexuals remain at low risk for AIDS

—*USA Today*, October 6

Study finds increased heterosexual risk of AIDS

—*Baltimore Sun*, same day

(thanks to William Kristol, Washington, D.C.)

□ DON'T BANK ON IT:

Greenspan Backs New Bank Roles

—*New York Times*, October 6

Greenspan Cool On New Powers Asked by Banks

—*American Banker*, same day

(thanks to Kathleen Day, Washington, D.C.)

□ ARE THERE SHARKS IN ARIZONA?
"There seems to be almost a feeding frenzy of calls for resignation. . . ."
—Arizona Governor Evan Mecham's press secretary, *New York Times*, October 10, page 12

"The sharks are in a feeding frenzy."
—Pat Robertson, *New York Times*, October 10, page 13

□ YOU READ IT HERE FIRST: TNR contributing editor Robert Reich is editor and co-author of a new book, *The Power of Public Ideas* (Bollinger Press), about how political visions do and should shape public understandings of the public interest. *Curse of the Giant Muffins*, a collection of articles from these pages and elsewhere by TNR editor Michael Kinsley, was recently published by Summit Books.

□ WHOOPS: As typographical connoisseurs may have noticed, we accidentally flipped the credits on the dueling headlines in the October 19 issue. The *New York Times* got it right and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* got it wrong, or perhaps it was the other way around.

Can the Democrats win the South?

Dixie Fix

DEMOCRATIC presidential nominees have won Southern states a grand total of 12 times in the last five general elections, and Jimmy Carter was responsible for 11 of them. He swept the South, save Virginia, in 1976 (en route to the presidency) and won Georgia again in 1980. The 12th Democratic victory, by Hubert Humphrey, came in Texas in 1968. The lesson here is straightforward. A Democratic presidential candidate needs some Southern states—and a chunk of the 138 electoral votes in the South—to win the White House. Paul Kirk, the Democratic national chairman, predicted last July: "The Democratic Party will prevail nationally in 1988 only if it is truly competitive in America's South in November 1988."

There's some evidence that the party may be getting there, but it's dubious. In 1986 Democratic challengers ousted incumbent senators in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. A Democrat also won the open Republican seat in North Carolina, and another turned back a strong, lavishly financed Republican bid for the open Democratic seat in Louisiana. To make matters better, these Democrats won in the face of President Reagan's furious campaigning. In the case of the Republican incumbents, Reagan appeared at rallies in each of their states two or more times.

The second piece of evidence is the parade of Southern Democratic senators who in October declared their opposition to putting Robert Bork on the Supreme Court. The anti-Bork contingent was not limited to liberals, such as Wyche Fowler of Georgia, or moderates such as Bennett Johnston of Louisiana. Even the more conservative types, Richard Shelby of Alabama and John Breaux of Louisiana, joined. Only one Southern Democrat, Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, endorsed Bork. Further, public support for Bork never materialized in the South, contrary to what the Reagan White House had expected. In fact, Bork lost support in the South, dropping in a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll from 47 percent in favor of confirmation and 32 percent against in August to 46 percent-46 percent in mid-September.

In truth, the Senate victories and Bork opposition don't mean much for 1988. In his July speech Kirk asked the right question: "If Democratic candidates can win statewide elections in the South, why haven't national Democratic candidates won more contests in the region?" But he didn't have much of an answer. He said that it would require "the national Democratic Party to look first at itself." He added, "The Democratic Party must broaden its national base without abandoning its traditional base." That's a goal, not an answer.

What Kirk missed was the difference between Southern electorates in off-year Senate races and the same electorate

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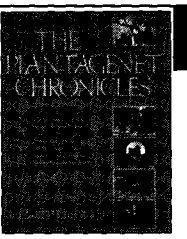

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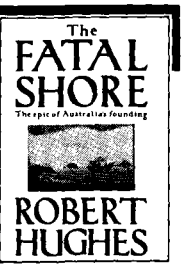

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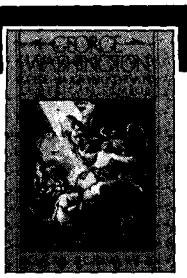

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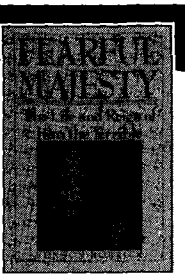

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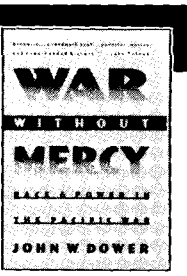

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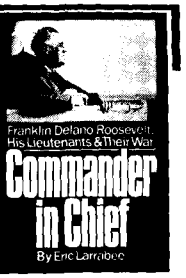

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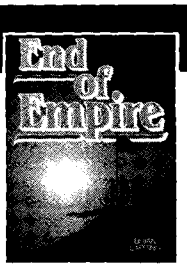

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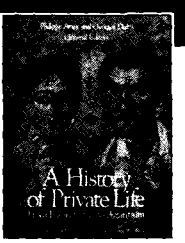

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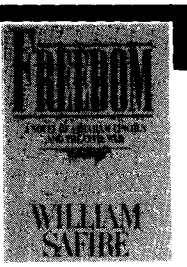

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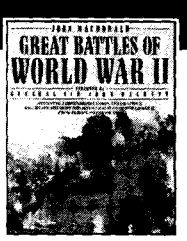

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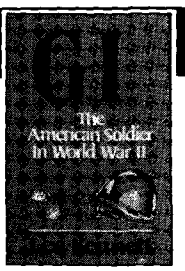

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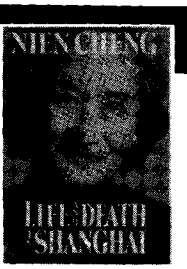

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in presidential elections. Roughly one-third of the voting-age population goes to the polls in non-presidential years in which statewide offices are contested in the South. With this electorate, Democrats have a better-than-even shot at winning. Even so, Fowler, Shelby, and Terry Sanford of North Carolina barely knocked off GOP incumbents in 1986. Bob Graham of Florida won more handily. But in presidential years, the electorate is about one-half of the voting-age population. And a majority of these extra voters are white and conservative. Hence, there's a built-in advantage for the GOP, the more conservative party, in the South in presidential races.

The opposition to Bork reflects a change in Southern politics, but not one at the presidential level. Senators were under stiff pressure from liberal activists and their followers to vote against Bork. These people—blacks, labor, teachers, trial lawyers, urban liberals—are now a pivotal, even dominant, bloc in Southern primaries. This is new. The primary electorate is only about one-seventh of the voting-age population across the South, but Democratic senators have to worry about the disproportionate influence the activists wield. And since Bork's arid performance before the Senate Judiciary Committee generated little popular support—he had no "Ollie Northness," according to Atlanta pollster Claibourne Darden—it was easy for Democratic senators to oppose him. For them, political pain would come only if they backed Bork.

IT'S THIS SMALL, relatively liberal electorate that the Democratic presidential contenders face on Super Tuesday next March 8. But the more important electorate is the one in November. It's larger and much more conservative. Political scientists Earl and Merle Black argue persuasively in their new book *Politics and Society in the South* that the Republican presidential candidate (whoever he is) will sweep the South in 1988 unless the GOP makes a "stupendous" error or the Democrats nominate a candidate with particular appeal to white voters. True, it's possible the Democrats could nominate such a candidate. But not likely. Anyone conservative enough to attract white Southerners—Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, for instance—is almost surely too conservative to win the nomination.

Blacks give the Democratic nominee a base in the South, but it's a small one, about 16 percent of the electorate. The problem is that the national Democratic Party is liberal, and the vast majority of the white voters are conservative, even the working-class ones. Democratic senatorial candidates recognized this in 1986. Sanford played up his FBI background and his paratrooper duty in World War II. He tilted to the right. But it's hard for a presidential nominee to do this after having veered to the left to get the nomination. The Blacks write in their book that the "breadth of the Democratic collapse" at the Southern grass roots in presidential races is "staggering. It would be difficult to find comparable instances in American political history of such a rapid and comprehensive desertion of an established majority party by an entire region."

Worse for the Democrats, Republicans have "a comfortable margin of error" now, according to the Blacks. After decades of Southern landslides in presidential elections, Republicans achieved parity with Democrats in the 1952-64 era. Since then, their dominance has grown, as Republican candidates inherited most of the vote that George Wallace captured in the South in 1968. In the last four elections, including Carter's victory in 1976, the Republican candidates (Nixon, Ford, Reagan twice) have won 57 percent of the vote. To achieve this, they had to capture nearly two-thirds of the white vote, which is now normal. "The growing preponderance of Republicans and independents, coupled with the decline of hard-core partisan Democrats, has created a Southern white electorate that regards Democratic presidential candidates with suspicion, if not active hostility," the Blacks write.

A SERIES OF "focus groups" with 77 voters in Atlanta, Houston, Greensboro, and Birmingham last June came to the same conclusion. They were conducted by the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, a Democratic think tank in Washington. "The general voting patterns of 1984 appear to be quite resilient, with both core Democrats and Republicans expressing party loyalty and swing Democrats strongly—though not irreversibly—inclined to back the Republican nominee," said the directors of the study, Mark Rovner and William Galston. That's an understated way of saying Republicans don't need Reagan to win the South. Among other things, Rovner and Galston said Iranamok hasn't hurt GOP chances in the South next year. Unlike Watergate, "The reaction to the Iran-*contra* affair has not taken the form of a generalized revulsion against the Republican Party."

The most alarming finding involves swing Democrats, who routinely vote Republican in presidential elections but still consider themselves Democrats. To win in the South, the Democratic candidate must lure them back. But they are generally satisfied with the state of the economy under Reagan, Rovner and Galston found, and now consider the GOP to be closer to their views. True, they are skeptical about Reagan's foreign policy, especially in the Middle East. Their strongest views, though, are on social issues. They are "social traditionalists." They like the fact that Reagan agrees with them, and hope his successor will too. "Generically, Republican presidential candidates begin with a clear presumption in their favor—a head start—among swing Democrats," Rovner and Galston said. "When we asked [the swing voters] whether they thought they were more likely to vote for the Republican nominee or the Democratic nominee in the 1988 general election, 17 out of 24 said Republican, only two said Democratic, [and] the remaining five weren't sure."

Granted, the number of participants in the study was small. But although the findings aren't conclusive, they make sense to me. If I were a Democratic strategist, I'd be worried about carrying a single Southern state in 1988, including Texas. The Bork case hasn't changed the equation. In fact, many of the Southern Democrats opposed to Bork insist they'd be delighted to vote for a conservative

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justice, just not this one. I believe that's exactly what they will do once Reagan sends up another nominee. Then maybe the idea that Democrats have overcome their massive presidential problem in the South will quietly fade away.

FRED BARNES

POSTCARD POLAND

LUNCH WITH LECH

THREE CARFULS of SB men waited outside St. Bridget's Church in Gdansk while we finished our coffee. They must have known why we were there and whom we were going to visit. We had discussed our plans openly on my Warsaw hotel room telephone. A whole motorized section was overkill. A sergeant on a motorbike would have sufficed.

One of the cars stopped us on the city's outskirts and asked where we were going. "On a picnic," our driver told him, although it was pouring rain. "Come on, come on. Where are you going? Are you going to Lech?" The driver nodded. "Let's see your papers," ordered the policeman.

Between us we managed three Polish identity cards and one European Parliament laissez-passer. And so we waited, a carload of SB men behind as well as in front, wondering if we were ever going to make it for tea at Lech Walesa's country house. An SB man returned after 15 minutes with our documents. Our driver asked him if he was joining us on the trip. "Then we could break the speed limits." The SB man smiled awkwardly, trying to tell us that he is not really a bad Pole, just a poor policeman trying to do his job.

Superficially, this was the badinage of men playing schoolboy war games. In reality, it is not a game at all. My guides had known violence and internment during martial law, "the war." Now they are out of jail, but like the vast majority of Poles they deeply resent the security police and being forced to live under a non-elected government imposed on them by their Eastern neighbor.

We finally reached Lech Walesa, the man who launched the trade union Solidarity, recruiting ten million members in his first few months. Solidarity had reached three-quarters of the work force and was on its way to becoming Poland's first democratic government before it was declared an illegal organization. In December 1981 the army came in. Walesa was interned, released, and sent back to work as an electrician in the Gdansk shipyards.

Solidarity was scotched in 1981, but it was not killed. Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983. Today, if free elections were held, most observers agree, Walesa would win at least 70 percent of the vote. This is why the guardians of the regime, the SB, are constantly on the alert.

The problem is that the Poles, being more numerous than the Hungarians and more defiant than the Czechs, have to be treated with circumspection. Heavy-handed police methods, such as those traditionally used in Communist Europe, are not appropriate. The SB's murder of Father Jerzy Popieluszko in 1985 was an example of how not to do it. The public reaction was intense and the police's work made more difficult as a result.

Their orders now are to repress democratic movements in quieter, more insidious ways; to harass with mild penalties that will not enrage public opinion at home or discredit Poland abroad. A year ago they gave amnesty to all political prisoners, even those like Zbigniew Bujak, who had spent more than three years working underground for Solidarity and whom they had gone to great effort to capture. Strictures come in the form of fines, removing representatives from the factory floor, and keeping tabs on printers.

The Solidarity reply is not to run an underground army of resistance, but to maintain trade union activity, using the workers' councils that they extracted from the government before martial law. Solidarity also maintains a network of "unofficial" publications—so far about 500 regular periodicals and 2,000 book titles. Walesa says, "We have now moved to a more important stage, which means moving away from the introduction, with its emotional feeling, its strikes and banners, and encouraging a society whose instinct is to say 'no' to think positively and adopt positive programs."

WE WERE talking in the two-room pine cottage, far too small to accommodate a wife and eight children, where Walesa was spending his holiday, an hour out of Gdansk, three miles off the main road up a potholed track that would have disgraced the remotest corner of the Falkland Islands. My gifts of tobacco and whiskey were ill-timed. Walesa has given up smoking and August was Solidarity's "month of sobriety," a protest against the mass alcoholism, tolerated by the government, that for years has dimmed the Polish nation's initiative and sapped its will.

The determination that was obvious in television clips from 1980-81 when he sat across the table from Communist negotiators is still there. "We are fed up with being the paupers of Europe. So it is in everyone's interest, especially Europe's, to help Poland reform itself away from this absurd system—the economy, law, and politics—a labyrinth of the absurd that we have to escape from."

The absurdity he complains about has, if anything, got worse since my last visit in 1969. There is now enough poverty, with an average wage of $95 month and a 20 percent inflation rate, to make nine out of ten Poles weep, while the tenth, the one with access to dollars, laughs all the way home from the foreign currency desk. Televisions still take five minutes to warm up and foreign films, instead of being dubbed or subtitled, are translated by a man reading all the parts, including the women's, from a script. A small car costs six years' average work—or

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$1,200 if you have an uncle in Chicago.

"This should be a land flowing with milk and honey," says Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Solidarity's spokesman. "Instead we have farmers plowing 15-acre holdings with a horse and drawing water from a well, unable to rationalize land holdings, refused bank credits and starved of seed and fertilizer. Their children are leaving the land, their average age is nearly 60, and *still* their productivity is higher than in the state sector."

Solidarity today, he says, has a "staff" of 70,000 in its underground structure. Some collect dues. (He claims a million paying members.) Others (unknown to the management) work for reform in the joint councils. Others manage the underground press.

Still, membership is small compared with 1981, and this encourages the government. Nowadays only the politically engaged minority, not the masses, opposes the government actively. Exhilaration has given way to political apathy and depression, with many people thinking about a car or holiday, both of which the new official trade union can give at cut price, rather than about freedom and human rights. The official trade union, a fountain of privilege for loyal and industrious workers, has recruited several million members. This is the measure of the government's success.

SOLIDARITY STILL has some cards to play, however. Western countries recognize it as Poland's "official" opposition. They invite its spokesmen to embassy parties and include them in the ceremonies surrounding the visits of VIPs. In a recent visit to Warsaw the Kennedys, including Teddy and Ethel, gave the Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award to two leading Solidarity supporters, Zbigniew Bujak and Adam Michnik. Poland owes the West $35 billion. Such Western "interference" therefore gives Solidarity valuable protection.

Their banners are still to be seen in crowds, especially at football matches or during the pope's recent visit. The SB fights them with binoculars, cameras, radios, and snatch squads, but the demonstrations persist. Several churches have become Solidarity shrines, with memorials to the anti-Communist wartime leaders and the several thousand officers murdered by Stalin at Katyn in 1940. On the outskirts of Warsaw, at St. Stanislaw's in Zoliborz, where Father Popieluszko is buried, there was a crowd of several hundred kneeling, laying flowers, and lighting candles at the graveside. Old men were there with their grandchildren, explaining other memorials in terms of a succession of tragedies heaped on Poland by the Soviet Union. The police did not intervene.

The following day, after some negotiation, I was able to talk to Jacek, a Solidarity printer. These are the most closely watched men in the Polish opposition and the most wary of any casual encounter. Jacek has already served a term of imprisonment and lost his job as a steelworker. Every week he makes 8,000 copies of his "newspaper" for distribution in the factories. Production is a nightmare. Getting replacement IBM "golf balls" for his typewriter, he says, "usually means bribing someone in a government repair workshop and, if you choose the wrong man, getting denounced and caught."

Paper is the illegal publishing world's worst problem. Anyone buying more than 1,000 sheets in a shop has to show an identity card. Details of the transaction are recorded. SB agents lurk about the shops, on the lookout for big buyers. When they see one, they follow him from the shop, hoping he will lead them to the equipment.

If Jacek is arrested again, he will be punished under the "gentle" rules brought in after last year's amnesty: 48-hours' detention and a 50,000-zloty fine (two months' average salary). Any car involved in transporting the publications—and the smallest car costs one million zloties on the open market—can be confiscated. There are even threats that the apartments now used as literature stores may be taken away by the state as well.

The books and magazines nevertheless get printed, distributed, and sold through a complicated free enterprise system involving tens of thousands of people all operating on the fringes of the law. And the fact that the government cannot stamp out the illegal trade, without causing an uproar at home and once again making Poland an international outcast, supports Lech Walesa's view that the system will not survive the technical advances of the 20th century.

Walesa signs a few letters, including one to the U.S. Congress, which has just voted Solidarity a $1 million grant. We headed back to Warsaw, followed by the SB. Every moment our exhaust system held on was a minor miracle. We passed through farms with a few cows on them, each one secured to the ground with a metal chain, turning the grass into six-yard-diameter circles of new-mown lawn. Next month there is a referendum on economic reforms proposed by the government. As a test of popular support, the referendum is another absurdity in an absurd system. There is no option for voting no.

NICHOLAS BETHELL

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What now for the gay movement?

THOSE WERE THE GAYS

BEFORE, DURING, and after the March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights its organizers proclaimed the event a watershed in gay politics. "For love and for life, we will not go back" was the official march slogan. As things turned out, their rhetoric had some backing. The march attracted some 200,000-500,000 people (depending

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on whose estimates you believe)—far more than the 40,000 who showed for the last march in 1979, and comparable to the 600,000 who marched against the Vietnam War in 1969. But the march was also a one-shot deal, a weekend-long party for many attendants. While it flexed some of the political strengths of the gay rights movement—its passion to do something about AIDS and its increasing visibility—it also exposed the movement's weaknesses.

THE CURRENT gay rights movement dates to the Stonewall incident of 1969, when gays at a Greenwich Village bar physically retaliated against police harassment. The incident kicked off a wave of "coming out" nationwide, particularly on university campuses. Throughout the 1970s the priority for gay activists was to maintain the trend, to break, as one gay leader put it, "the conspiracy of invisibility." In California gays showed how visibility could translate into statewide politic clout. In 1978 their organizing efforts helped defeat an attempt by state Senator Harvey Briggs to ban gays from teaching in public schools. They swayed popular opinion against anti-gay attacks by orange juice dispenser Anita Bryant. And most important, in 1976 San Francisco gays made Harvey Milk the first openly gay elected official in the country. When Milk was assassinated by an anti-homosexual co-worker two years later, gays mourned—but they also made sure that another gay man, Harry Britt, took his place on the board of supervisors.

But the 1970s also saw the gay rights movement inextricably associated with sexual promiscuity. "It was liberation politics. Being gay and being overtly sexual was chic," says Chuck Ortleb, publisher of the gay newspaper the *New York Native*. In New York and San Francisco especially, the bathhouses became a symbol of gay progress. "Gay men had nothing but their sexuality to call their own," argues gay author Larry Kramer. "They couldn't marry, couldn't raise children, couldn't not be discriminated against. Somehow everything got washed away but the sex."

The election of Ronald Reagan, with his emphasis on family values, was the first major check on the movement. The political resurgence of Christian fundamentalism was the second. The third, of course, was AIDS. "At first, AIDS derailed our political momentum," says Tim Sweeney, a New York legal advocate for gay rights. Or, as Kramer puts it, "People realized that in an age of AIDS you can't talk about the right to fuck in the streets." Instead, gay men had to familiarize themselves with political issues such as health-care funding and AIDS-related discrimination. And, subtly, the ideology had to change too. "For a long time gays' objective was to get the government off our backs. With the advent of AIDS it became very clear that there were some problems the government had to be involved in," says Virginia Apuzzo, Mario Cuomo's official liaison to the gay and lesbian community.

As the disease spread, a new type of gay activism grew. Hybrid organizations, devoted both to caring for persons with AIDS and to lobbying, sprung up. In 1982 Kramer started Gay Men's Health Crisis in his Manhattan living room, from funds collected by passing a hat. The organization now has an annual budget of over $7 million, and a volunteer list of over 1,700. The new activism brought groups like the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Human Rights Campaign Fund to Washington. "They did not have an awareness of how things got done in Washington, but they were extremely quick learners," says one congressional staffer who worked on AIDS funding.

But the concern over AIDS that has pushed gays into mainstream politics may overshadow other gay concerns once central to the movement, such as anti-discrimination statutes, the right to marry, to raise children, to win custody of children by former marriages in divorce cases, and the repeal of sodomy laws. "One of our worries is to what degree do we subsume everything to AIDS," says Jeff Levi, executive director of the NGLTF. Other gay issues aren't as well known as AIDS problems, and at least on the federal level, there's been scant progress. One gay rights bill stalled in Congress has about as much chance of being passed as the ERA does. If anything, the law is moving against gays: last year's *Bowers* v. *Hardwick* Supreme Court decision upheld the constitutionality of state laws criminalizing homosexual (but not heterosexual) sodomy.

The *Hardwick* case prompted gay leaders to reassess what some considered a dependence on the Supreme Court, and to reconstruct the movement. "People are seeing a need for more grass-roots activity if we are to be a part of the democratic process," says Carmen Vasquez, a lesbian activist in San Francisco. The recent proliferation of gay organizations focusing on AIDS has provided a network to support such local and statewide political activity. The National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, for example, now has chapters in Washington, Baltimore, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Durham, North Carolina. There are also plans for a Lesbian and Gay Congress, to coordinate all grass-roots movements.

ANY BREAKTHROUGH will have to wait for major heterosexual support, which may never come. Levi hopes that the sight of gay men taking care of their own—and teaching straight people methods of caring for AIDS patients—will soften heterosexual prejudice and facilitate the growth of the movement. That's possible. Just as likely is increased anti-gay hostility due to fear of AIDS. Incidents of violence against homosexuals have risen from 2,042 in 1985 to 4,946 in 1986, according to the NGLTF. A related problem is that mainstream heterosexual politicians are unsure whether gay groups can actually deliver votes. The day before the Washington march, staffers from the presidential campaigns of Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, Dick Gephardt, and Paul Simon gathered to pitch their candidates to gay voters. Gay activists wanted to hear how they would benefit by supporting these candidates; the staffers wanted to see what kind of support gay activists could muster. The answer was: not much. Total attendance at the meeting, including its organizers

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and the campaign staffers, was about 30.

To counter mainstream indifference, gay leaders' first tactic was to push their agenda through coalitions with well-established liberal groups such as NOW and the NAACP. But that strategy isn't working well either. "Gay people have no problems calling for an end to racism or sexism, but the people for whom those movements are their life have been very slow to endorse gay rights," says Don Michaels, editor of Washington's gay newspaper, the *Washington Blade*. Many straight blacks and women have little enthusiasm for aligning their causes with that of gays. "The other side is not as receptive as we'd like it to be," says Vasquez. "There's a lot of homophobia in the civil rights movement." The national branch of the NAACP admits they have no one specifically working on the issue.

Faced with these problems, the gay movement's more radical leadership has pushed a risky strategy of allying with the activism and ideology of the far left. At times, the march had elements of a 1960s parody. Speakers talked about AIDS and the "Native American." One group held an "Animal Rights" banner, while another pushed socialist feminism. At one point a speaker announced that "the African National Congress extends its fraternal greetings." Vendors sold buttons that read, "Your taxes pay for torture, rape, and murder in Central America." Gay conservatives might be forgiven for being unmoved. None of the big-name speakers—Jesse Jackson, Cesar Chavez, actress Whoopi Goldberg—had any particular association with gay issues. Chavez, stretching for a link, called on gays to boycott California grapes, claiming that the pesticides with which grapes are sprayed make the immune system more vulnerable to the AIDS virus.

TO ADD TO these external problems, the gay movement is also deeply divided within itself, in a way that the rhetoric of the march refused to admit. Gay men and lesbians have a long history of social tension, which spills over into politics. The result is a potential threat to an already frayed coherence. Many of the issues important to lesbians are women's issues: abortion rights and "economic discrimination," to name two. Their more radical agenda was clear at one march rally: "We are not here to parrot heterosexual marriage," proclaimed a lesbian speaker. "Nor are we here to perpetuate the white patriarchy that has oppressed us for so long. . . . We are not a movement of crotch politics." Kramer observed: "If I have any quibble with the March on Washington [it] is that it was under the control of lesbians for whom AIDS is not a priority issue." At the march itself, there were many more gay men than lesbians, with little interaction between the two. That's because, given the nature of their sexual practices, it's almost impossible for lesbians to become infected with the AIDS virus.

If the gay movement is to make headway in the next decade, it might start with facing up to some of these contradictions. Is it primarily now a public health organization, a civil rights movement, or another band to a defunct rainbow coalition? Is it aiming for political reform or social revolution? Without a clearer focus, a tighter agenda, and an end to some of the more nostalgic whimsy of the 1960s, the gay movement could be defeated by something more mundane than the onslaught of AIDS: its own incoherence.

RICHARD BLOW

Second Thoughts on the 1960s.

HARRY, KRISHNA, AND ME

Editors' note: On the weekend of October 18 in Washington, the National Forum Foundation sponsored a "Second Thoughts Conference" at which former 1960s radicals applied two decades of hindsight to the nature of the New Left and related phenomena. What follows is a paper presented at that conference by the distinguished philosopher and militant deconstructionist, P. J. O'Rourke.

WHAT I BELIEVED IN THE '60s

Everything. You name it and I believed it. I believed love was all you need. I believed you should be here now. I believed drugs could make you a better person. I believed I could hitchhike to California with 35 cents and people would be glad to feed me. I believed Mao was cute. I believed private property was wrong. I believed my girlfriend was a witch. I believed my parents were Nazi space monsters. I believed the university was putting saltpeter in the cafeteria food. I believed stones had souls. I believed the NLF were the good guys in Vietnam. I believed Lyndon Johnson was plotting to murder all Negroes. I believed Yoko Ono was an artist. I believed Bob Dylan was a musician. I believed I would live forever or until 21, whichever came first. I believed the world was about to end. I believed the Age of Aquarius was about to happen. I believed the I Ching said to cut classes and take over the dean's office. I believed wearing my hair long would end poverty and injustice. I believed there was a great throbbing web of psychic mucus and we were all part of it. I managed to believe Gandhi and H. Rap Brown at the same time. With the exception of anything my parents said, I believed everything.

WHAT CAUSED ME TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS

One distinct incident sent me scuttling back to Brooks Brothers. From 1969 to 1971 I was a member of a "collective" running an "underground" newspaper in Baltimore. The newspaper was called, of all things, *Harry*. When *Harry* was founded, nobody could think what to name the thing so some girl's two-year-old son was asked. His grandfather was Harry and he was calling everything Harry just then so he said, "Harry," and *Harry* was what the paper was called. It was the spirit of the age.

Harry was filled with the usual hippie blather, yea drugs

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and revolution, boo war and corporate profits. But it was an easygoing publication and not without a sense of humor. The want-ad section was headlined "FREE HARRY CLASSIFIED HELP HEP CATS AND KITTENS FIGHT DIPPY CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION." And once when the office was raided by the cops (they were looking for marijuana, I might add, not sedition), *Harry* published a page-one photo of the mess left by the police search. The caption read, "Harry office after bust by pigs." Next to it was an identical photo captioned "Harry office before bust by pigs."

OUR "COLLECTIVE" WAS more interested in listening to Captain Beefheat records and testing that new invention, the waterbed, than in overthrowing the state. And some of the more radical types in Baltimore regarded us as lightweights or worse. Thus, one night in the summer of 1970, the *Harry* collective was invaded by some 25 blithering Maoists armed with large sticks. They called themselves, and I'm not making this up, the "Balto Cong." They claimed they were liberating the paper in the name of "the people." In vain we tried to tell them that the only thing the people were going to get by taking over *Harry* was $10,000 in debts and a mouse-infested row house with overdue rent.

There were about eight *Harry* staffers in the office that evening. The Balto Cong held us prisoner all night and subjected each of us to individual "consciousness-raising" sessions. You'd be hauled off to another room where ten or a dozen of these nutcakes would sit in a circle and scream that you were a revisionist running dog imperialist paper tiger whatchama-thing. I don't know about the rest of the staff, but I conceded as quick as I could to every word they said.

Finally, about 6 a.m., we mollified the Balto Cong by agreeing to set up a "people's committee" to run the paper. It would be made up of their group and our staff. We would all meet that night on neutral turf at the Free Clinic. The Balto Cong left in triumph. My airhead girlfriend, however, had been converted to Maoism during her consciousness-raising session. And she left with them.

While the Balto Cong went home to take throat pastilles and make new sticks or whatever, we rolled into action. There were, in those days, about a hundred burned out "street people" who depended on peddling *Harry* for their livelihood. We rallied all of them, including several members of a friendly motorcycle gang, and explained how little sales appeal *Harry* would have if it were filled with quotations from Ho Chi Minh instead of free-love personals. They saw our point. Then we phoned the Balto Cong crash pad and told them we were ready for the meeting. But, we said, "is the Free Clinic large enough to hold us all?" "What do you mean?" they said. "Well," we said, "we're bringing about a hundred of our staff members and there's, what, 25 of you, so . . . " They said, uh, they'd get back to us.

We were by no means sure the Balto Cong threat had abated. Therefore the staff photographer, whom I'll call Bob, and I were set to guard the *Harry* household. Bob and I were the only two people on the staff who owned guns. Bob was an ex-Marine and something of a flop as a hippie. He could never get the hair and the clothes right and preferred beer to pot. But he was very enthusiastic about hippie girls. Bob still had his service automatic. I had a little .22 pistol that I'd brought in a fit of wild self-dramatization during the '68 riots. "You never know when the heavy shit is going to come down," I had been fond of saying. Although I'd pictured it "coming down" more from the Richard Nixon than the Balto Cong direction. Anyway, Bob and I stood guard.

We stood anxious guard every night for two weeks, which seemed an immense length of time back in the 1970s. Of course, we began to get slack, not to say stoned, and forgot things like locking the front door. And through that front door, at the end of two weeks, came a half dozen hulking Balto Cong. Bob and I were at the back of the first office. Bob had his pistol in the waistband of his ill-fitting bell-bottoms. He went to fast draw and, instead, knocked the thing down in the front of his pants. My pistol was in the top drawer of his desk. I reached in and grabbed it, but I was so nervous that I got my thigh in front of the desk drawer and couldn't get my hand with the pistol in it out. I yanked like mad but I was stuck. I was faced with a terrible dilemma. I could either let go of the pistol and pull my hand out of the drawer or I could keep hold of the pistol and leave my hand stuck in there. It never occurred to me to move my leg.

The invading Balto Cong were faced with one man fishing wildly in his crotch and another apparently being eaten by a desk. It stopped them cold. As they stood perplexed I was struck by an inspiration. It was a wooden desk. I would simply fire through it. I flipped the safety off the .22, pointed the barrel at the Balto Cong, and was just curling my finger around the trigger when the Maoists parted and there, in the line of fire, stood my airhead ex-girlfriend. "I've come to get my ironing board and my Herman Hesse novels," she said, and led her companions upstairs to our former bedroom.

"It's a trap!" said Bob, extracting his gun from the bottom of a pant leg. When the Balto Cong and the ex-girlfriend came back downstairs they faced two exceedingly wide-eyed guys crouching like leopards behind an impromptu barricade of overturned bookcases. They sped for the exit.

IT TURNED OUT later that Bob was an undercover cop. He'd infiltrated the *Harry* collective shortly after the first issue. All his photos had to be developed at the police laboratory. We'd wonder why, every time we got busted for marijuana, the case was dropped. Bob would always go to the district attorney's office and convince them a trial would "blow his cover." It was important for him to remain undetected so he could keep his eye on . . . well, on a lot of hippie girls. Bob was in no rush to get back to the Grand Theft Auto detail. I eventually read some of the reports Bob filed with the police department. They were made up of "_____ is involved in the *Harry* 'scene' primarily

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as a means of upsetting his parents who are socially prominent," and other such. Bob is now an insurance investigator in Baltimore. He's still friends with the old *Harry* staff. And of the whole bunch of us I believe there's only one who's far enough to the left nowadays to even be called a Democrat.

WHAT I BELIEVE NOW

Nothing. Well, nothing much. I mean, I believe things that can be proven by reason and by experiment, and believe you me, I want to see the logic and the lab equipment. I believe that Western civilization, after some disgusting glitches, has become almost civilized. I believe it is our first duty to protect the civilization. I believe it is our second duty to improve it. I believe it is our third duty to extend it if we can. But let's be careful about the last point. Not everybody is ready to be civilized. I wasn't in 1969.

P. J. O'ROURKE

P. J. O'Rourke's recent collection of essays, *Republican Party Reptile*, is published by Atlantic Monthly Press.

The next democratic revolution?

BURMESE DAZE

Rangoon

Within the next couple of decades, Rangoon will probably fall down. An artificial city, grafted by the British onto a seaport in the Irrawaddy Delta, it's oddly reminiscent of parts of Glasgow or Liverpool. But with a difference: it's virtually gutted. In drawing rooms where bourgeois Indians once drank tea, Burmese peasants now boil food on dirt floors. Outside, men in shallow hats stand in open sewers, their heads peeking above street-level. Now and again the heads bob down, as they shovel excrement into the piles of black sludge that punctuate the capital's streets. The rain is now the best sewage system Rangoon has.

It's a running joke here that almost every Western article written about Burma is a "peeling-paint piece." It's not hard to see why. In 25 years the military regime has condemned one of Southeast Asia's richest countries to what seems like terminal decline. Take Rangoon University, formerly the most prestigious of the region's colleges and the cradle for Burma's once-resilient middle class: its elegant buildings now stand open to the air. In the strike of 1936, the student union produced the leaders who dragged Burma from Britain in 1948, making the university a shrine to the hopes of independence. Now there's an open space where the union building used to be. In 1962, during the coup that ended 14 years of parliamentary democracy, the army razed it. Soldiers killed 114 students at the time. Twelve years later, in campus protests during the funeral of U.N. General Secretary U Thant, crowds of students were fired on by troops with automatic rifles. Burmese exiles recall truckloads of bodies being driven across campus. Hundreds of prisoners, some of them as young as 17 when they were detained, are still locked up.

Since 1962 the military government has pursued what it calls the Burmese Path to Socialism, a program of austere isolation from the outside world. For foreigners, this means a maximum of seven days' stay in Burma. For the Burmese, leaving the country is virtually impossible: if you get your passport, you're allowed a maximum of five dollars foreign exchange to take with you. The program also entails stifling state control of the economy and society, with calamitous results. Despite enormously fertile and mineral-rich land, and freedom from external wars, Burma's GNP is just struggling ahead of Vietnam's and is one-sixth of its naturally poorer neighbor, Thailand. Once the world's largest rice exporter, Burma is now applying for Least Developed Country status at the U.N. In 1985 it was designated the seventh-poorest nation in the world.

The surprise, though, is that the decline is deliberate. The black market has been tolerated since 1967, out of necessity, but elsewhere private entrepreneurship is quashed in favor of pervasive—and incompetent—military control. Last year, for example, the government suddenly made private tourist and bureaucracy guides illegal, replacing them with hapless officials. But there are other priorities, including racism. Ethnic Burmese have trading and business privileges, while Indians and Chinese, long the most dynamic contributors to Burma's economy, are denied full citizenship and find it nearly impossible to get clerical jobs or a place in medical college. In any case, not many are left: about 200,000 were expelled in the early 1960s.

Political control is maintained by the army and the secret police. The presence of informers can be felt everywhere. Within 30 minutes of visiting Rangoon University, word was passed to me that I would have to leave. There had been too much rowdiness in recent months for a Westerner to be allowed to stay. A student hurriedly explained it was the "system," and asked me not to speak to him anymore.

THE REAL MYSTERY is why there has been no mass revolt against this suffocation. Political fatalism inheres in even the most educated and alert, making Burma at times a country of literally pathetic gentility. I met an economics graduate near the massive Shwe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon. (In Burma, even economics students know how to pray.) He was an expert in computers, a listener to the BBC, fluent in English. Yet his country had six computers to its name, and for all practical purposes wouldn't allow him to leave. But he was far from bitter. Only eventually did he confide: "Yes, I am fed up. We are all fed up. But there is no possibility at the moment for change." He continued to pray.

Buddhism undoubtedly enhances the apathy. Burma, on a par with Tibet or Nepal, is a profoundly religious country—and its pure branch of Theravada Buddhism is radi-

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cally at odds with both political action and individual rights. Its attempt to overcome the individual ego and to meet materialism with indifference cuts against the Western doctrines of both superpowers. Buddhism doesn't look to renounce the world, as in Protestantism; nor to sanctify it, as in Catholicism. Rather it seeks a moderation toward the material—and the temporal—that can render them merely irrelevant. In a city where poverty is soaring, Rangoon's major construction project is now Socialist Program Party Chairman Ne Win's pagoda (an irony revealingly lost on the Burmese). It will be covered in gold and gilt. Yet this extravagance is probably the most popular action of Ne Win's rule. At bottom, it seems, the Burmese just don't care about politics. Or if they do, they know that they shouldn't. It's hardly a recipe for revolution.

This indifference to the West—both spiritually and politically—is a tough nut for "democracy" to crack. Late British attempts in a short 62 years of direct rule to decentralize self-government soon degenerated into civil war. U Nu's democracy from 1948 to 1962 only just managed to move beyond an elected one-party state: by the late 1950s divisions within the ruling party spilled over into contested elections, and the instability created by this uncommon outbreak of popular choice was the pretext for the army's intervention.

Ethnic and regional conflict—simmering on and off since the 12th century—remains the wild card in Burma's political future. The current civil war has lasted 40 years, with annual casualties in the thousands and, according to Amnesty International, flagrant human rights abuses against minorities by the Rangoon army. Around 16,000 troops of minority tribes have used guerrilla warfare to force a military stalemate on Rangoon. Added to them are some 10,000 maverick communists, financed by the opium trade, with few ties to Beijing and fewer to Moscow. Together they control around a third of the country. But the pressure on Ne Win is unfocused: the tribes have been fighting for regional secession rather than political change, and the communists' aims have little popular support.

The complexity of the war also makes intervention by the superpowers a risk not worth taking. As a result, Burma's torpid isolation continues. Those anti-communist Burmese opposed to separatism and hostile to Rangoon are being squeezed into irrelevance. They are, after all, fighting for something uninteresting to either superpower, and inimical to much of Burmese culture: their freedom.

THERE ARE signs, though, that this paralysis cannot hold for much longer. The momentum of other moves to democracy in the region, the succession struggle to the 76-year-old Ne Win, and the now accelerating economic collapse have finally made change thinkable in Rangoon. The two recent air crashes on the notoriously incompetent state-run Burma Airways, killing a total of 59 Westerners, have further undermined the government's credibility. But what makes real change feasible is the emergence, for the first time, of a coherent, militarized opposition. Military successes for Rangoon in the last two years have had the ironic effect of forcing a newly unified command among the tribes and a firmer defensive pact between them and the communists. The minorities' organization, the National Democratic Front, has now also developed a Washington link, a pro-Western exile grouping called the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma. This July the NDF and the exiles held a congress in a small hut in East Burma to set new terms for negotiating a transition to democracy. The minorities dropped their calls for secession, asking instead for an semi-autonomous position within a federal Burma. For the first time, ethnic majority Burmese were included in the peace plan. Meanwhile the communists have muted their ideology. They now recognize that a military victory is an impossibility, and that a Western wing for their allies could prove useful as a lever against the regime.

In mid-August, in an unprecedented speech, Ne Win admitted that there had been mistakes over the last 25 years, and promised Gorbachev-style reform: "The entire truth should be submitted without any attempt to hide the facts." Within the last month, the reasons for such a political concession became clear. In a sign of near-panic, the government introduced radical measures to counter the sudden economic slide, given extra impetus by a disastrous rice harvest. On September 5 it announced an end to the first ordinance it had enacted 25 years ago. It freed all controls on the internal exchange of food. At the same time it withdrew all notes worth more than ten American cents to dampen the burst of inflation, undercut the rebels by invalidating their currency, and helped move foodstuffs to avoid famine. With barter restored, it seems even the feudal economy is more efficient than the socialist one.

THE RESULT, though, was chaos. Hundreds of students, finally shaken out of apathy by signs of government panic, stoned buses, taxis, and soldiers. This time, the troops held their fire, and merely closed all educational institutions indefinitely. The reason for such forbearance was that even the army was cracking: the same week, there were unconfirmed reports that the regime called in all commanding officers to a conference to quell any incipient insubordination. An opposition document recently smuggled out of the country suggests why. Written by a military officer, it called for a Philippines-like alliance between the military and "people power" for a democratic—and free market—breakthrough. It's a prospect Ne Win has begun to take seriously.

But whatever the immediate outcome of the present crisis, there is another, more troubling question to be asked about Burma's future: What if democracy succeeds? And what meaning can capitalist democracy have anyway for a Buddhist country with a history of monarchy, colonialism, and military socialism? Ne Win's regime, for all its brutal stupidity, survived for a quarter century on one popular premise: antipathy to modernity, of which democracy is perhaps the most alien part. "Socialism" was an inspired device to freeze the meaning of premodern life in modern terms. The bureaucracy sustained what looked increasing-

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ly like an old-style Burmese monarchy; the isolation fed the powerful strain of Burmese xenophobia; the declining economy enhanced a spirituality that remained, as in Eastern Europe, the only unbreakable barrier against the lies of the state. The result was a fragile experience of spirituality and coherence, which the Burmese, especially outside the cities, found bearable despite the brutality. As they greet the painful prospect of a Bangkok-style liberalization, it is an experience they may find hard to forget.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

Inside the corporate welfare maze.

ANATOMY OF A RIP-OFF

IF YOU TUNE IN to Sunday morning public affairs programming, you've seen the ads. A police cruiser roars across the Great Plains. "The Nebraska state police needs reliable fuel," the voice-over intones gravely. "That's why they use fuel made from ethanol." This miracle fluid, we learn, is made from corn, which burns cleaner than ordinary gasoline, and cuts our dependence on foreign energy sources to boot. Other ads show a woman filling her tank at a gas station and musing to herself on the benefits of gasohol. Yet another is designed to tug at our heartstrings, showing the anguish of a farm family as their homestead goes on the auction block—until ethanol comes to the rescue.

Ethanol production is dominated by the Archer-Daniels-Midland Corp. Based in Decatur, Illinois, ADM is one of the nation's largest agribusinesses, with profits of $235 million last year on sales of $5.2 billion. A quarter of those sales—around $1.3 billion—were of ethanol and corn sweeteners, two less-than-miraculous products that would be hopelessly unprofitable except for a wild combination of overlapping government handouts.

ADM is to corporate subsidies what Ronald Reagan's Cadillac-driving welfare queen is to aid for the poor—with the slight difference that this corporate welfare queen really exists. The purpose of the ads is to protect ADM's welfare check by associating ethanol in the public mind with everything that is warm and wonderful about America.

But ADM does not rely on social psychology. Its chairman, Dwayne Andreas, is a long-time believer in acquiring political clout the old-fashioned way. In the days before contribution limits, he gave $100,000 to Hubert Humphrey's 1968 presidential campaign. In 1972 he gave $150,000 to Humphrey for the primaries and—for good measure—$200,000 to Nixon in the general election.

In recent years, Andreas's favorite—but by no means exclusive—beneficiary has been Senator Robert Dole. According to Edward Pound in the *Wall Street Journal*, Andreas, his family, and ADM-related groups have contributed $130,000 to Dole's various campaigns. Dole also has flown often on ADM's private plane. The *Journal* reports Elizabeth Dole recently purchased (for $150,000, half its apparent value) an apartment at a Florida hotel of which Andreas is the chairman. Besides Andreas and Dole, the 34 apartment owners include Robert Strauss, Tip O'Neill, Howard Baker, and David Brinkley.

THE TRULY miraculous property of ethanol is its ability to generate vast profits while being completely uneconomical. The magic begins with the federal government's efforts to help corn farmers. Pay attention, because this can get complicated. The corn subsidy has two main components. The first is crop loans. The government "loans" farmers so much per bushel (currently $1.84), with his crop as collateral. If the market price of corn happens to be below that figure—which it has been for many years, fluctuating between $1.20 and $1.50 per bushel—nine months later, the farmer can keep the money and "forfeit" his crop, which Uncle Sam puts into storage. For the farmer, it's a no-lose proposition. If the price of corn ever rises above the loan rate, however, the farmer can sell the crop, pay off the loan, and pocket the difference.

Besides the government "loan," the farmer receives a "deficiency payment," to make up the difference between the loan rate and an arbitrarily determined ideal level known as a "target price" (currently $3.03). As is self-evident, a corn farmer has to be pretty dense not to participate in this program. The result is bumper yields. This sea of corn naturally tends to depress the market price, requiring even more subsidies to keep the farmers in business, and round and round. Total cost to the taxpayer: $14 billion last year alone.

Here's where ADM comes in. They buy a great deal of that artificially cheap corn and process it into something called High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS). The syrup is in turn refined into sugar substitute and is then sold to industrial consumers of sweeteners, such as Coca-Cola, which uses it instead of sugar (that's why new old Coke doesn't taste the same as old old Coke).

The only reason there is a market for this stuff is that it is also government policy to keep American sugar prices artificially high. In 1981 the Reagan White House was desperate to pass the Kemp-Roth tax cuts. As part of the deal that caused the critical Louisiana Democratic delegation to defy its leadership and support Kemp-Roth, the White House agreed to tighten greatly the sugar import quota. Cheap sugar from the Caribbean and the Philippines was hurting the few remaining American sugar growers, most of whom are in Louisiana and Hawaii.

Since the deal was cut in 1981, the United States has reduced its sugar imports by 82 percent, and in the process practically wiped out what's left of the economies of the Dominican Republic (which lost over $240 million in export earnings), Haiti, and Jamaica. The sugar quota has been devastating to the Philippines to a degree our aid can't begin to make up for.

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The quota greatly increased the domestic price of refined sugar, which is the direct competitor of ADM's corn sweetener. From just nine cents a pound in 1981, the price has zoomed to 22 cents. (With the U.S. market effectively closed, meanwhile, the world price of sugar has dropped to six cents a pound.) Since ADM can manufacture corn sweetener for between nine and 11 cents a pound and sells it for between 18 and 19 cents a pound, they easily undercut the price of domestic refined sugar and make a killing.

So Coke buys sweetener from Dwayne Andreas for around 18 cents, while peasants starve for lack of customers at six cents. That's U.S. policy. In 1979 the entire corn sweetener industry produced just 1.7 million metric tons. Since the imposition of the sugar quota, industry production has soared to 5.5 million metric tons, more than 80 percent of it accounted for by ADM.

YES, BUT what about ethanol? Wait. ADM also refines and blends corn with alcohol to form ethanol that gets mixed with gasoline to form gasohol. The only reason this industry exists is because of a particularly insidious subsidy to promote the manufacture of alternative fuels that was introduced under the Carter administration's energy program.

Instead of receiving a direct support payment, gasohol retailers get a six-cent exemption from the nine-cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax. Since gasohol is composed of one part ethanol to nine parts gasoline, every gallon of ethanol itself is effectively worth a 60-cent tax exemption. Twenty-eight states also exempt ethanol from their own gasoline taxes. The ethanol in those Nebraska state police cars is effectively worth another 30 cents of state subsidy because of a three-cent exemption on the state gasoline tax.

These exemptions and nothing else make ADM's manufacture of ethanol profitable. The proof of this is that—even despite the federal subsidy—virtually no gasohol is sold in those states that decline to subsidize it. In Nebraska, however, ethanol can be sold at a profit even if it costs up to 90 cents a gallon (60 cents plus 30 cents) more to produce than the gasoline it competes with. These days, the subsidy is worth almost as much as a gallon of gasoline.

The cost of this program is not reflected in money expended from the Treasury. But it adds to the federal deficit in precisely the same way because of money not collected into the federal Highway Trust Fund. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that last year alone gasohol subsidies cost the government $460 million. More than half of that effectively went to ADM.

It's not like the Reagan administration and Congress don't know what's going on. In an exceptionally blunt 1986 report, "Fuel Ethanol and Agriculture: An Economic Assessment," the U.S. Department of Agriculture Energy Office concluded that gasohol production "cannot be justified on economic grounds" and that the industry has no prospect of long-term survival without continued massive government subsidies. While the Reagan administration is officially committed to abolishing the gasohol program, it has refused to make that effort a major priority and has even acted to shore up the program when it showed signs of wilting, as it did when oil prices collapsed early in 1986.

This brings us to yet another subsidy. The free-fall in oil prices last year, from $30 a barrel to about ten dollars, hit ethanol very hard. Andreas threatened to shut down his ethanol plants, most located in farm belt states such as Iowa and Illinois, unless the government bailed him out. Instead of jumping for joy that a corporate welfare junkie was volunteering to kick the habit, the administration—unwilling to be viewed as causing even more unemployment and misery in the farm belt—gave in. Since the cost of ethanol is largely determined by the cost of what goes into it, mostly corn, the answer to ADM's problems lay in making the already artificially low price of that commodity even lower, namely free.

The Agriculture Department issued ethanol producers the ultimate supermarket coupon: certificates entitling them at absolutely no charge to the surplus corn in government storage. Archer-Daniels-Midland received by far the biggest share of these certificates, 54 percent of the total, worth a cool $29.2 million. That kept ADM in the ethanol business until oil prices began to rise again.

AND WE'RE NOT through yet with the ethanol subsidies. The government also guarantees loans for the construction of ethanol plants. Michael Isikoff reported in the *Washington Post* that the Energy Department recently paid $70 million to creditors of Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, who owned an ethanol plant in Louisiana that apparently couldn't compete despite all the other subsidies. The government also protects domestic producers of this alleged miracle fuel with a 60-cents-a-gallon tariff on imported ethanol. A prime mover behind this tariff was Senator Robert Dole.

But Dole is hardly the only politician to get money from ADM. Statesmen of such widely separate views as Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa have received money from ADM's political action committee. Senator Paul Simon, who received $1,000 from ADM for his presidential campaign, has introduced a bill with Dole that would require all fuel sold in the United States by 1992 to be 50 percent ethanol.

When I called Simon's office and pointed out that ethanol is hopelessly uncompetitive with ordinary gasoline at current prices, Simon's spokesman said, "The operative words are 'at current prices.'" He said Simon fully expected oil prices to rise in the future. Isn't it true, I asked, that the senator has in the past advocated an oil import fee that would achieve that purpose? Well yes, the spokesman said, but I must understand the two issues "are completely separate." What about corporate welfare? "The senator doesn't see it as a corporate welfare issue," he declared. "He sees it as a farm aid issue." Oh.

JOHN A. BARNES

John A. Barnes is deputy editorial page editor of the *Detroit News*.

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A guide to the buzzword of 1987.

THE COMPETITIVENESS CRAZE

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

COMPETITIVENESS IS at once our most pressing economic problem and our most unhelpful cliché. Congress has an official "Competitiveness Caucus" of 202 members, who agree that America must compete better, and agree on little else. The word regularly appears in corporate advertising hailing free enterprise, and in trade union ads seeking protection. It is another of those issues in impatient America that has made the full round-trip, from hopelessly obscure to hopelessly trite and back to obscurity again, without ever getting the serious hearing it demands. For the buzzword may go away, but the issue won't.

Competitiveness, at bottom, has a simple meaning, and it presents genuine dilemmas for an American economy abruptly tethered to a larger world economy. Simply put, the issue is whether American goods and services can be made as efficiently and productively as those of other nations. If not, then we must grow both relatively poorer and absolutely poorer, as the logic of an open world economy relentlessly causes advanced, efficient production to gravitate elsewhere. If it takes America 80 man-hours to make a Ford and Japan 40 man-hours to make a comparable Toyota, economic logic does not dictate that we get to make half as many cars; it dictates that we make no cars.

The real issue is not whether competitiveness matters, but what to do about it. Here, expert opinion divides between the free marketeers and the planners. The planners further divide into those who think government should be a strategic player in the economy versus those who think government should merely mop up the social mess left by the inevitable dislocations of a healthy capitalist economy. For the free marketeers, the least government intervention will produce the best outcome; America's apparent uncompetitiveness reflects too many years as cock of the walk, its sheltered industries, overpriced labor, mediocre education, lately compounded by the effects of a federal deficit and an overvalued dollar. To make America competitive, let capitalism be capitalism. Overlaying government planning, in this view, would only make things worse.

The trouble with this view is that there is no country that prospers via pure capitalism, unless one takes a very wishful view of Thatcher's Britain. Our competitors all plan more explicitly than we do, and all use variants of "corporatism"—deliberate business-government collaboration, with or without labor as junior partner. One can identify relatively egalitarian corporatist countries—West Germany, Sweden, Japan—and relatively low-wage, authoritarian ones such as Korea and Taiwan, but no successful cases of pure laissez-faire.

What is interesting about this debate is that it defies the usual ideological and partisan pigeonholes. One finds planners and free marketeers in both parties and on both ends of the conventional spectrum. Business-oriented planners such as Bruce Scott of Harvard Business School argue that mercantilist "development-oriented states" are successful not just because they plan, but because they are not burdened with high wages and a welfare state. America, in this view, needs to plan strategically, but using low wages, cheap capital, and weak social overhead as the weapons. Other planners, such as Harvard's Robert Reich, argue that government-business collaboration should aim to keep the high-wage, high-skill jobs and advanced technology at home, and that it makes little sense for an advanced industrial nation to grow "competitive" by cheapening its wages and living standards.

Even in the laissez-faire Reagan camp, the president's Commission on Competitiveness, chaired by John Young of Hewlett-Packard, appalled many Reaganites when it called for even a minimalist brand of government-industry collaboration. The late Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige favored a MITI-style Department of Trade. Conservative Republican strategist Kevin Phillips's latest book had the seemingly oxymoronic subtitle "The Business Case for an Industrial Policy"; and Clyde Prestowitz, for six years the Reagan administration's chief Japan expert, is the author of a forthcoming mercantilist treatise that makes most liberal planners seem timid.

Conversely, Fred Bergsten, a leading Democratic economist, is in the anti-planning camp, as are Charles Schultze, Robert Z. Lawrence of Brookings, and most other Democratic advisers. The anti-planners point hopefully to the fact that although the trade deficit is still immense, the volume of U.S. exports is up about 18 percent this year, thanks to the cheaper dollar. Of course, given that a cheaper dollar buys fewer imports, the dollar imbalance, which is what counts, is wider than ever. Argentina, in the same fashion, is exporting more wheat than ever before, at less money per bushel, and is growing steadily poorer.

The economic reality in the United States, as elsewhere, is one of subtle and multiple entanglements between business and government. The uniquely American problem is that our version of this entanglement is particularly ill-suited to the task of competing in a global economy. Our financial and political institutions and our free market ideology typically combine to produce bailouts rather than dynamic or strategic advances. Our labor market institutions produce a rule-book mentality rather than the true

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collaboration that competitiveness demands.

The U.S. government influences the competitiveness of American industry—by inadvertence: through Pentagon contracts, or NASA research subsidies, or pension bailouts, or emergency loans, or trade quotas negotiated in response to complaints of foreign dumping. But the explicit goal is almost never a more competitive American industry. Whenever an explicit strategy is proposed in the name of competitiveness, for example on the issue of whether to subsidize advanced semiconductor research, Americans tend to get very nervous because this brings the government-business liaison out of the ideological closet.

An instructive case is that of LTV Steel. At this moment, the government agency determining the future of America's second-largest steelmaker is the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, which has neither the charter nor the competence to orchestrate a restructuring of the steel industry. The PBGC got into the act because LTV is being reorganized under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act, leaving the PBGC to pick up the tab for $1.3 billion in unfunded pensions. LTV is in bankruptcy despite the fact that it is highly competitive at making steel. In fact, the U.S. steel industry, after a brutal series of capacity reductions and the layoff of half its work force, is today slightly more productive on average than the Japanese. LTV Steel, far smaller than it used to be, currently has more than two retired workers for every active worker, a ratio that cannot possibly be economic, no matter how efficient its steelmaking.

This economic deadweight reflects several factors: that steel pensions were negotiated during an era when the industry was growing; that pensions in the United States (unlike most industrial nations) are company-based and company-financed rather than part of a more comprehensive social security system; that U.S. law permits companies to raid pension reserves on the dubious assumption that the company will always be healthy enough to make annual cash contributions to the fund; and the fact that the one government agency that gets involved in bailouts has no mandate to worry about the eventual health of company or industry.

In the latest round of the LTV affair, company and union agreed that LTV would pay supplemental benefits to some 8,000 laid-off workers not covered when the PBGC took over LTV's pensions. At that, an indignant PBGC concluded that the company must not be so broke after all, and shifted full responsibility for all pensions back to LTV. If the PBGC's position is upheld in court, all the modernizing and restructuring will have been in vain, for the company could well cease operations.

Consider the larger dilemma. From the PBGC's narrow perspective (and that of the Reagan administration), LTV committed two sins: it agreed to overly generous pensions in the first place, and it got the PBGC to pick up some of its liabilities, then continued pensioning off workers. If every employer could do this, the PBGC itself would be bankrupt; so LTV must be taught a lesson.

Now, one can make a case that the economy should be run on pure social Darwinist principles, with losing entrepreneurs and workers in failed industries facing appropriate ruin. Or one can make a case that if government is necessarily involved in smoothing out transitions it might as well get something for its pains. But the American approach falls between those two stools.

In Japan and Germany, government often decides whether to rescue a troubled company before it goes bankrupt. And when such a decision is made, sufficient capital is provided, usually with private banks taking the lead. In the United States, this was once done by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (and is still done in the case of insolvent banks by the FDIC). But, as the steel case shows, our government typically has the mentality of liquidator rather than rescuer, despite spending several billion dollars in the process. "Restructuring" is not part of the policy agenda.

GOVERNMENT, of course, is intimately involved in capitalism's ongoing process of "creative destruction," whether through the bankruptcy courts (which allow failed enterprises orderly reorganizations), or pension bailouts, or unemployment insurance, or, for that matter, through regulating capital markets or providing capitalists with tax incentives. The entire Pentagon contracting apparatus is one big subsidy, which gives industry the security of an assured market. Moreover, a nation's most important comparative advantage is the quality of its work force; on that basis, our public school system is an illicit subsidy, as is Sweden's renowned system of subsidized retraining and Germany's highly efficient state-financed program of apprenticeship. (In trade litigation, plaintiffs have contended that Canada's cheap hydropower is an illicit subsidy.) But it is pointless to debate whether linkages are illicit. They are necessary realities of industrial society. And most of our competitors see these relationships as part of a strategic national endeavor. Most Americans don't.

Government is also intimately involved at the other end of the industrial spectrum—in the growth sectors of the information economy. The old dichotomy of "sunrise" versus "sunset" industries is entirely misleading, because steel, a declining industry in the sense that its market is shrinking, nonetheless involves highly advanced technology; and semiconductors, a state-of-the art growth industry, have similar problems of market share and capacity reduction. Semiconductors have quickly become a commodity, like wheat. If Japan's famed targeting, its subsidized research, and its ability to administer prices, to survive downturns on the business cycle, and to use vertical integration to hide true prices and costs provided an ongoing strategic advantage for Japan's semiconductor-makers, then the U.S. semiconductor industry would not merely lose customers; it would soon be out of business.

The U.S. semiconductor industry has sought to remain competitive by establishing a research consortium called Sematech, which plans a six-year, $1.5 billion collaborative effort to advance production technology. Once developed, the new technology would be licensed to member companies and, after a slight delay, to any American company. As it happens, the U.S. government already spends about

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$400 million on semiconductor research every year, almost all of it for narrow military purposes. One major Pentagon-financed project is the development of a chip that will survive intense radiation—not a project with many civilian markets. By contrast, Sematech would produce commercially fruitful applications.

Not surprisingly, a growing source of federal subsidy for semiconductors is the administration's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"), which wants industry to develop chips particularly suited to outer space. In general, SDI is an epic case of a disguised industrial policy, and it follows a long-established pattern. Far too many of our most advanced industries were developed under contract to the Pentagon, with far too few commercial applications. All over academia, and in high technology firms, engineers and scientists who are skeptical of Star Wars' military applications are nonetheless lined up to apply for funding. This is the one government window open for business. The military today consumes a record 73 percent of federal R&D funding.

Both the steel and semiconductor industries are part of a larger economic phenomenon—worldwide overcapacity—which is a natural tendency of capitalism, compounded today by the increasing habit of governments to "target" development of key industries. Both industries are currently enjoying a respite from cutthroat price-cutting only because of agreements to manage trade and limit overcapacity. So the competitiveness issue and the trade issue are inextricably linked, even if free trade remains the desired norm.

AMERICA HAS a competitiveness problem beyond gyrations in the dollar, the current federal deficit, or "unfair" practices by our competitors. The signs of our relative industrial decline were quite plain by the early 1970s. A serious competitiveness plan would include the following:

- A much more coherent government strategy to facilitate necessary industrial restructurings, both with respect to labor and capital. Rather than simply absorb pension liabilities and lay off workers in industries such as steel, government should consider how much capital is necessary to consummate successful restructurings, help provide financing, and pay workers to get retrained rather than paying them to quit working. This simply cannot be entrusted to the bankruptcy courts as the only arbiter of the public good.
- A serious education initiative, both to improve basic education and to add a layer of lifetime learning and retraining so that the American work force could upgrade and revise skills throughout working life as the actual needs of the economy evolved. This approach has been mooted not because it is too radical—indeed the business-led Committee for Economic Development recently proposed something along these lines. It has been mooted by the fiscal politics of the Gramm-Rudman era that precludes spending new public money.
- Front-door research subsidies to leading-edge industries, to establish state-of-the-art American technology rather than relying on accidental spillovers of Air Force, NASA, and Star Wars contracts and pretending this is something other than a subsidy.
- A trade policy that acknowledges that government-industry collaboration, both at home and abroad, is an inevitable characteristic of modern industrial society. The United States ought to help fashion consistent and reciprocal rules accepting that reality, rather than looking to punish sinners.

But each of these approaches has been kept off the agenda either because it costs too much or because it contradicts our deeply held belief that any form of planning, or industry-government collaboration, is illegitimate. Instead, the great "competitiveness" initiative of 1987 is the trade bill (the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act), a largely defensive and pitifully inadequate response that continues the American penchant for building half a bridge. The bill, now pending in House-Senate conference, is just jingoistic enough to annoy our allies without addressing any of the deeper problems of American industrial transition (or, for that matter, the real problems of the trading system).

The bill does have some useful provisions, such as mandatory notice of plant shutdowns and tougher strictures against piracy of technology. It would require industries seeking trade protection to develop "adjustment" plans, although, ironically, the plan to fund such assistance proposes a new tariff that is probably illegal under the GATT. But these relatively benign ideas are overshadowed by the bill's broader premise that our trade problem is at bottom the result of "unfair" practices by competitors.

The bill may well raise the risk of trade conflict without quite getting at the roots of American uncompetitiveness. If you believe that it is irresponsible of major nations such as Japan to run enormous trade surpluses year after year, surely the remedy is to insist that Japan roughly balance its accounts with the world trading system as a whole, and not bilaterally.

Nor does the bill deal with the issue of worldwide overcapacity in a growing number of industries. Nor does it do anything to upgrade the quality of American industry and labor, or to socialize the pain of necessary industrial transitions, or improve industrial relations, all of which must be part of any long-term competitiveness strategy. "Getting tough" is only a small part of a trade policy, and the riskiest part, at that.

So competitiveness remains a buzzword, rather than a serious national goal. And the nation is left, by default, with a strategy of cheapening our currency, slashing our wages, borrowing our way to short-term prosperity, relying on the Pentagon as a covert industrial policy, fulminating about unfair practices abroad, and watching industrial leadership pass relentlessly to our competitors. The irony is that many American industries have trimmed down to fighting weight, productivity is again on the increase, and U.S. capacity to design attractive products seems to be bouncing back. America has the ability to compete; what it lacks is political leadership and imagination. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Survivals

The facts of Lillian Gish's career outstrip press agent hyperbole. To frame the career: she made her film debut in 1912, and her latest film was released this October on her 91st birthday. As it happens, in the past ten months I've seen her in *The New York Hat*, done in her first year; in *Way Down East* (1920); in *Buried Alive* (1933), a delightful comedy with Roland Young made from an Arnold Bennett play; and now in the new picture. Her performances in such silent films as *Orphans of the Storm*, *Broken Blossoms*, *Romola*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *La Bohème* help explain why a book about her, published in 1932 by Albert Bigelow Paine, was entitled *Life and Lillian Gish*. J. M. Barrie once said of Ellen Terry that for several decades every young man proposed to his intended by asking, "Since I can't have Miss Terry, may I have you?" For Terry at the turn of the century, read Gish in the 1920s.

The Whales of August
(Alive Films)

Hope and Glory
(Columbia)

Like thousands of others, I saw the one-woman show that she toured around the world in the 1960s, in which she sat at the side of the stage and commented on clips from her films as they were projected. It was almost metaphysical to see and hear the present person speaking about her timeless self. I've also had the chance to see her many times on stage. (She began in the theater and played for David Belasco.) Although I can't say that her theater work was as effective as her film acting, her presence, especially as Ophelia to John Gielgud's Hamlet in 1936, had enchantments. Note, too, that she directed a film, called *Romancing Her Husband* (1920), starring her sister Dorothy, of which Burns Mantle wrote: "[Lillian Gish] is almost as good a directress as she is an actress—and that's going some."

In this new film, her 105th, called *The Whales of August*, Gish plays a widow who summers with her widowed sister on an island off the Maine coast where they have gone since they were girls. Gish is the stronger and gentler of the two, guiding her somewhat difficult blind sister through the small troubles of daily life. No kind of leeway need be given Gish in judging her performance: she does everything in the role that the Gish of 75 might have done. Her control, her truth in every moment, would be praiseworthy in any actress, and in a nonagenarian, they are more than astonishing, they are charming.

Bette Davis, who is 12 years younger than Gish, plays the sister under a handicap. Davis has clearly undergone debilitating physical experience. The trouble is not that she is no longer the trenchant woman she once was: she is not that woman grown older. The once pert and vivacious Ann Sothern is on hand in a spherical reincarnation, accompanied by a cane, and Vincent Price, though somewhat rickety, continues to ooze urbanity as he passes.

The screenplay by David Berry, adapted from his own play, is a lesser example of the *Orphans* genre: an actors' holiday in which it's difficult to discover what the holiday celebrates besides the acting. The cetacean title (in two senses) refers to the fact that a prologue shows the sisters when young running out of the house to watch whales sporting offshore and that when the aged sisters come to look for the whales, they miss them. I suppose this Means Something, but it escaped me. All that is put before us is daily routine, daily little grumbles by Davis and smoothing by Gish, a visit by a noisy handyman, some reminiscences of Gish's long-gone husband, and a dinner with an island neighbor. The dialogue runs like this: "A beautiful day, Mrs. Webber." "Yes, it certainly is a beautiful day, Mr. Maranov."

Lindsay Anderson, that highly talented British director who has never made a satisfactory film, doesn't improve his standing here. But, burdened with this script, all he can be faulted for is agreeing to do it—which he very likely did for the chance to work with the two stars.

In Italy, when there's to be a cross-country bicycle race, fans of one cyclist or another will paint words of encouragement along the course. If they support a racer named, say, Calamandrei, they will paint, "Forza, Calamandrei" in letters three feet high on walls and billboards so that Calamandrei can take strength from them on his way. In three-foot letters, then: "Forza, Lillian Gish."

Among British directors, John Boorman currently has a higher reputation than Lindsay Anderson, and I can't think why. Style and artistic intelligence are clear in several Anderson films (*This Sporting Life*, *If . . .*), while Boorman, after his first film, the affecting *Having a Wild Weekend* (1965), has mostly gone in for facile artiness (*Leo the Last*, *The Emerald Forest*). Boorman's latest is a different kind of failure.

Hope and Glory is drawn from his boyhood memories of life just outside London during World War II. The idea of

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hamburger Hill. Purpose: to drench us with the sensations of this pointless, bloody Vietnam battle and, possibly, to make us feel responsible. Despite some pulpy spots, it succeeds. (Reviewed 9/14&21/87)

Theme. Surprisingly candid Soviet film in which a middle-aged playwright faces the sterilities of his servile past and, touched by a free-spirited young woman, possibly reengages hope. Excellently acted and directed. (10/26/87)

The Whistle Blower. Intelligently written, well-done drama about the underworld of British Intelligence. Michael Caine is moving as a father whose son is victimized. (8/10&17/87)

Wish You Were Here. A headstrong English girl, her teenage high spirits and troubles. A seaside town, 1951. Emily Lloyd's breezy performance triumphs over a pat ending. (8/3/87)

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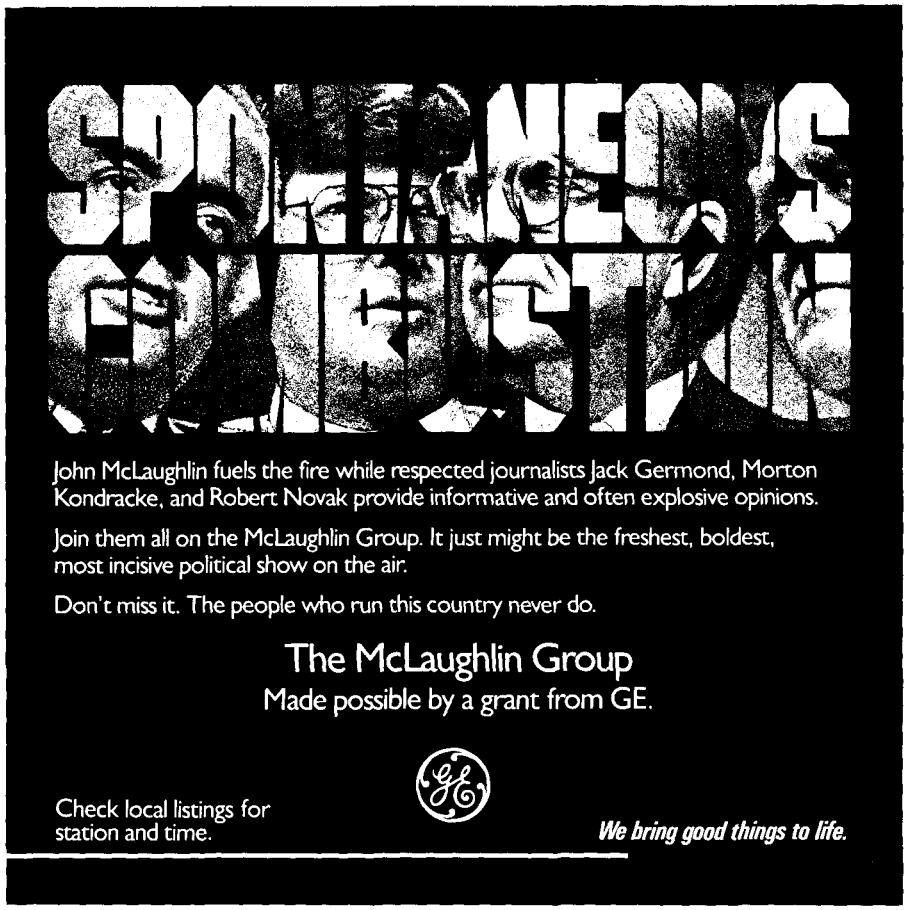
seeing that war through a child's eyes is not new—René Clement's *Forbidden Games* springs first to mind. Boorman's view, however, is fundamentally comic, and this is the best aspect of the film. To the seven-year-old boy through whose eyes we view everything—well, almost everything—the war is seen in a particular aspect. The Blitz gives him the chance to collect bits of shrapnel from anti-aircraft barrages; to dream of walking in his pajamas through a corpse-littered battlefield; to join a secret gang of boys who loot the rubble. His are not the only juvenile views: while war is being announced on the radio on September 3, 1939, his teenage sister bursts into the family group in the living room petulantly asking about her stockings.

This child's-eye approach, in the screenplay by Boorman himself, might have developed cumulatively into poignancy and grim hilarity. But the film plods along so doggedly in search of ways to show the humor of the boy's perspective that in a short time, we lose the perspective and become chiefly aware of the plod. This means that we become aware that we have seen all this before—the ration troubles, the air raids and fires, the wartime flirtations, the wartime sex. It becomes a stale film with faint touches of a fresh view.

Even those touches are hindered by Boorman's directing. Such a rush of hectic cutting. Such misconstrued humor (a sequence in which a man runs alongside a car because his hand is caught in the door). Such corny composition of family groups, like small-town studio portraits. The cinematographer was Philippe Rousselot, whose work in *Thérèse* was beyond praise. Here, presumably at Boorman's instruction, the colors look like old hand-tinted prints. I've never been so aware of lipstick—it's even in one bedtime shot of the boy.

Sarah Miles, an exceptional actress, does her best as a lower-middle-class mother, banal though the writing is. She seems miscast in class terms until we meet her father, a testy old gent obviously of a higher class than his son-in-law. Ian Bannen plays the old man with some crackle. The others in the cast, including the boy, are at best unimpressive.

Two nice touches, however. When a German pilot parachutes into the neighborhood, we hear "Siegfried's Rhine Journey." When an anti-aircraft blimp breaks loose and bumps along rooftops, we hear "The Dance of the Apprentices" from *Die Meistersinger*.



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A new museum in Paris rewrites the history of painting.

WHOSE CENTURY WAS IT, ANYWAY?

BY JED PERL

THE OLD TRAIN stations of Europe, no matter how grimy they may have become, retain a certain romantic aura, and that's probably what the French government was after when it transformed an abandoned station on the Left Bank, the Gare d'Orsay, into its new museum of 19th-century art. The Musée d'Orsay, with its elaborate iron and glass construction, is a highly theatrical space; the catwalks and ramps and multiple levels and sweeping views of the city create an effect akin to the great crystal palaces of the 19th century. This station, which was designed by Victor Laloux and opened in 1900, has been spruced up, as if it were going to be used as a movie set; and it's also been revamped and accessorized by the postmodern Italian designer Gae Aulenti, so that it has some of the gift-wrapped allure of a boutique or a nightclub. With its deep perspectives and rich details, it shows up beautifully in photographs. The Orsay is a gigantic curiosity, a surefire draw with the tourists. But all of this has the effect of competing with the paintings and sculptures it contains. The age-of-railway metaphor, with its overtones of arrivals and departures and nostalgia, is all wrong for an art museum, where one wants to experience things in the here and now. At the Orsay you only really get in touch with the art once you've forgotten where it happens to be hung.

On entering the Orsay, visitors are confronted with a grand alleyway, running from the front to the back of the vaulted central space where the trains once arrived. Everything flows off of this main promenade, which Aulenti has designed in a pretentious neo-Egyptian style; it has something of the centrality that the Grand Gallery has at the Louvre. This concourse was apparently arranged as a place to relax in between one's visits to the adjacent galleries. It's filled with academic sculpture, much of it mediocre, which may have been seen as neutral, a mild amusement. The effect, though, is to place at the very center of the Orsay an aesthetic vacuum. And all around one hears a tangle of alternate voices—competing, contentious, irreconcilable.

The Orsay is a clever renovation, but not an inspired one—it's not comparable to the Musée Picasso, which was fit so snugly, so brilliantly into the 17th-century Hôtel Salé in the Marais. At the Orsay several of the old railroad station's waiting and reception rooms have been carefully restored, and though they're opulent in a rococo-revival, Third Republic way, they aren't used creatively: they've been filled with the dullest of period paintings and sculptures. Hasn't it occurred to anyone on the staff that if the mirrors in these rooms were covered over, they'd make a ravishing space for *great* paintings? I'd love to see the late Renoirs, in which Third Republic taste is finally carried to sublime heights, hanging here.

The Orsay is the first museum to reflect the enormous upsurge in 19th-century studies that has overtaken art history in the past 20 years. Historians have been going through the storerooms and basements of museums and galleries, bringing back into the limelight the generations of academics and *pompiers*—and the many naturalists too—who were buried in the triumph of modern art. It's all up on the walls of the Orsay—good, bad, atrocious together. Though painting and sculpture take a starring role, the museum also reflects the growing interest in the graphic and decorative arts. The old photographs have been taken out of the albums and portfolios in the libraries; the museum encompasses printmaking, architecture, furniture, design. It's honeycombed with little shows-within-shows: of Whistler's prints, of Atget's and P. H. Emerson's photographs; of the designs for the Opera House and its productions; of the 19th-century dictionary craze; of the early history of the movies.

In a way the Orsay is a reprise of all the interesting scholarly shows that have been mounted over the past 15 years. What's missing is the adventuresome spirit of those years—the sense of discovery that accompanied, for example, the early days of the photography craze, when it seemed every other antiquarian bookshop contained photographic rarities that you could pick up for a few dollars. At the Orsay the excitement of revaluation, and the accompanying shake-up of values, is solemnized. You're not supposed to enjoy the kitsch and the camp—you're supposed to learn something from it.

There's a subtle leveling process at work too. Ultimately, the subject of the Orsay is the democratization of taste in 19th-century Europe. The Industrial Revolution had severed the old aristocratic ties between a cultural elite and a power elite, and eviscerated folk and ethnic traditions. What began to develop in the 1840s was a commercial culture that was neither popular nor elitist, but had elements of both. This new commercial culture dealt in prepackaged images and emotions; it was available to everybody. (Its descendents are the big studio movies and the Hallmark greeting cards.) The Orsay, which basically covers the years 1848-1914, describes a crisis of authenticity in 19th-century cultural life. For artists, it was join or be damned. Painters and sculptors could either feed bourgeois ambitions with outmoded aristocratic imagery—thus the glitzy revivalism of the second half of the century—or else turn their backs on all hope of vital connection with a consensus of educated taste.

At the Orsay, which includes collections brought together from a number of Parisian museums, the avant-garde from Courbet to Matisse is presented as one among many responses to this culture in crisis. Though Françoise Cachin, the director of the museum, and her curators haven't overturned received opinion on who's great and who's not in the 19th century, they have tossed Manet and the rest of the avant-garde back into the historical stew. This is meant to restore the reality of history.

But whose reality? It is impossible to be true simultaneously to the academics who thought that Manet was a promising young man who hadn't fulfilled his promise, and to those who saw him as the most daring artist of his day. While these people lived at the same time—and sometimes knew one another—they were, mentally, worlds apart. The Orsay may be a museum that recaptures the

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Jed Perl is the author of *Paris Without End: On French Art Since World War I*, to be published next year by North Point Press.

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confused hodgepodge that is lived experience. But because the curators at the Orsay are unwilling to make aesthetic judgments, the museum ultimately fails to express the real exhilaration of living in culture in time, which has to do with trying to separate the good from the bad, and respond to new forms of beauty when they're really new. A museum where Courbet's *Artist's Studio* (1855) and Couture's *Romans of the Decadence* (1847) are given something like equal billing can't hold our confidence for long.

When you dissent about a museum that is encyclopedic as well as eclectic and amusing, you may run up against the accusation that you're being highbrow, elitist, anti-fun. The real question is what kinds of pleasure we expect from art, and how a museum can enhance them. Nineteenth-century academic sculpture may be fun; but a knockout Renoir nude is far more fun. Much of the kitsch at the Orsay is like a bad sugar fix. You may get a kick from the marmoreal porn of Schoenewerk's prone, curvaceous *Tarentine Girl* (1871), or Perraud's *Despair* (1861-69), a nude hunk with a handsome, downcast face. Ultimately, it's the kind of pleasure that leaves you feeling hollow, numb.

A French painter told me that almost everyone he's spoken to is disappointed with the museum. "Historically it's correct," he said, "but artistically it is not." And in *Le débat*, Claude Lévi-Strauss said he got a migraine at the Orsay; an art museum, he observed, shouldn't try to teach sociology. The Louvre exhausts in an exhilarating way; it keeps heaping peak experiences on top of one another until you can't take it anymore. It's exquisite torture. At the Orsay, it's very different—as if an extravagant but ill-planned feast has been hurled in your face.

One of the opening galleries at the Orsay, devoted to Ingres and his circle in the 1850s, gives a fair sense of how the museum's eclectic mix of classics, rediscoveries, and kitsch flattens everything out. The two good-sized Ingres here are *The Source* (1820-56), that iconic image of a standing female nude pouring water from a vase, and *The Virgin with the Host* (1854), a tondo of the virgin, eyes downcast, in a most pious mood. Along with these are works by Gérôme, including his polished essay in antiquarianism, *Young Greeks Watching a Cock Fight* (1846); an elegant portrait by Flandrin; and an annunciation by Amaury-Duval, which carries on its frame the inscription "Ecole d'Ingres."

All the work in this room is joined by clear contours and smooth surfaces. The Ingres are the only paintings with elements of genius to them. From the candelabra and attendant angels in *The Virgin*, Ingres generates a dazzling succession of contrapuntal curves; and *The Source*, though her look is too goody-goody, is a voluptuously rhythmical piece of figure painting. Still, these are Ingres in which the second-rate sentiment isn't ever quite transcended; he's falling into some of the same kinds of clichés as Gérôme. It's interesting to see to what extent Ingres was a part of his age, and even, at certain points, a victim of the age's aesthetic malaise. What's lost at the Orsay, though, is the tension between a great artist's taste and the period's taste. Here the Ingres don't look like failed masterpieces—they're just period pieces. And when you move from the Ingres to Gérôme's *Young Greeks*, you suddenly feel a new equanimity about Gérôme and his banality—he's just another manufacturer of period pieces. Ingres, Gérôme, Flandrin, and Amaury-Duval harmonize easily; they're passed off as members of the same close-knit family.

The galleries at the Orsay devoted to

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the academics of the 1880s and the 1890s are nightmarish. Cormon's *Cain* (1880), in which a bedraggled band of half-naked savages out of some Road Warrior movie marches across a desert landscape, is too awful—and too enormous—even to be funny; the only rational reaction is flight. When you stand in front of Couture's *Decadence* or Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*, you may be interested in seeing them because they have a place in the history books; you may also feel that you're wasting your time. Too much of the work on display calls for a very measured response—a response that makes it difficult to rise to the occasion of a Courbet, a Puvis de Chavannes, a Van Gogh.

The biggest mistake that's been made in setting up the Orsay involves the transfer of the great Courbets from the Louvre. At the Louvre the *Buried at Ornans* (1849-50) and the *Artist's Studio*, which are the last of the mammoth 19th-century masterpieces, were in the galleries that still hold the Davids, Gericaults, Delacroixs, and Ingres; there was the blissful sense of seeing the dialectic of history as it worked itself through. At the Orsay, Courbet has beautiful natural light, but nothing connects with him. He's a giant, shunted off by himself. At the Orsay the sense of history as a succession of artists interacting with one another is lost. Even Manet is presented without drama. He becomes just another stop-off along the way, a detour off that main sculpture alley.

If the Orsay does offer a fresh insight into 19th-century art, it's through the suggestion, perhaps inadvertent, that the emotional decadence of official art had an effect on the avant-garde as well. At the Orsay the famous emotional ambiguity of Manet, and the neutral tone of the early work of Monet and Pissarro, look like a reaction to the orgy of false feeling amid which these artists came of age. Courbet and Corot and the Barbizon painters had been freer with their feelings because they were the products of an earlier period, the 1840s, when the art establishment was still somewhat isolated from commercial taste. But by the 1860s the Salons were beginning to drown in kitsch; feeling—any kind of feeling—seemed dangerous.

When we arrive at the early Impressionists, we've been zapped by schlock, as they probably had been too. Those first, flat Impressionist paintings of gardens and country roads seem to say, "I'm just going to be direct and simple. Whatever I do, I'm not going to gush." The sentimentalization of moral or philosophic ideas in the potboilers of the Salons gave subject-matter painting a bad reputation among the avant-garde. Manet would start with a complicated narrative idea—and then leave the painting tentative, ambiguous, unfinished. The scientific ambitions of Impressionism are also related to this escape from sentiment. The 1860s and '70s are an emotional cooling-off period. When emotion and grandeur of conception return to French painting in the 1880s and '90s—with Monet's ecstatic coloring, Renoir's dance hall scenes, Van Gogh's brushwork, and the complicated compositions of Seurat and Cézanne—it's as if the avant-garde has purged itself of trash. The avant-garde is no longer afraid of its feelings, or of its longings for the grand styles of times past. A new age has begun.

DURING THE PAST few years many have been bemoaning the resurgence of interest in the academics and the *pompiers*; we've believed that the battles of modernism would have to be fought all over again. But that is the wrong way to look at the current situation. The academic paintings will never again have the prestige they had a hundred years ago, and the fringe loonies who are claiming that Bougureau is as great as Cézanne aren't setting policy at museums like the Orsay, and probably never will.

What's really happened is that the whole idea of believing passionately in one or another kind of art has fallen out of favor. The rule of thumb now isn't how a painting or a sculpture moves you; it's how interesting it is. And art can be interesting aesthetically, or historically, or psychologically—or just to bounce one's sensibility off of. Tastes aren't changing; the very idea of taste is falling apart. In this respect the Orsay is very much of a piece with the contemporary art scene at large. The same taste—or lack thereof—that hangs Cormon's *Cain* on permanent display in an art museum is filling the pages of the art magazines (and the art pages of the *New York Times*) with articles and reviews in which every kind of art is given the same weight, the same attention.

Françoise Cachin and her curators are casting a cold eye on the ideological and

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aesthetic battles that were once the lifeblood of art. At the Orsay 19th-century culture, primarily French, is grist for the scholarly mills. The line between a historian's impartiality and a museumgoer's alienation has become very fine indeed. The view of the century offered at the Orsay is touristic. Have the French forgotten that for 150 years, no matter where an artist happened to have been born, coming to Paris was a matter of coming home?

THE ANTI-ZIONISM OF FOOLS

Perdition
by Jim Allen

(Ithaca Press, 152 pp., £4.95, paper)

Perdition, a "play in two acts" by Jim Allen, is a strange book, both in content and in form. Advance copies were circulated in London, and seldom has such a tremendous commotion been caused by a play before it was even performed. The columns of the British press, especially the papers of the left, were full of articles and letters attacking and defending the play. A few misguided spirits called for Lord Chamberlain (who happens to be the chief censor), others wanted a prosecution under the Race Relations Act. *Perdition* certainly is a nasty play, and there is no good reason for a reputable theater to perform it, but there is no case, obviously, for censorship.

Libel, though, is a different matter. The book opens with the statement that a small passage of the play, and related passages in the supporting material and commentary that follow the text, had to be excised in view of a pending libel action, so as not to prejudice the legal process. This is something of an understatement: I counted ten pages on which omissions were made, and there are more deletions scattered through the rest of the text. In fact this is the third or fourth version of Allen's play to be circulated. Major changes were made not just because of the libel action, but also because historians brought to light many untruths. Some of these were removed in the earlier versions of the play, others were not.

Allen's play deals with the Kastner affair, that is, with the circumstances in which hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were deported and killed in 1944, and the attempt of Rudolph Kastner to strike a bargain with the Nazis to save some of those hundreds of thousands. But the central accusation of the play does not concern the responsibility of Kastner. The play is rather more ambitious in its allegations. It attempts to show that Zionism and Nazism were birds of a feather, that the Zionists tried to ally themselves with the Nazis even before the war because their interests coincided, that the Zionists, far from undertaking rescue efforts during the war, sabotaged them.

The text of the play is followed by an essay by Lenni Brenner, entitled "Zionism and Rescue." This contribution is quite appropriate, for the historical inspiration for Allen's play was provided not by the books on the Holocaust that the author lists at the outset (in place of the customary list of dramatis personae), but by Brenner's *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (1983). Allen refers to Brenner's book as "a gold mine of information."

Brenner's essay (and an essay by Akiva Orr on the Kastner case) is followed by endorsements of the play by three public figures. Erich Fried is well known in Germany and Austria as a translator of Shakespeare. He is also passionately involved in Germany's left-wing sectarian politics; one of Fried's pet notions is that the Mossad killed Baader and Meinhof, the leading German terrorists of the '70s, in their Stuttgart prison. In the middle of his letter of support for Allen's play, Fried suddenly remembers that while Allen accuses the Zionists of never having fought Nazism, right-wing German historians (such as Ernst Nolte) accuse the Zionists, in the person of Chaim Weizmann, of having declared war on Hitler in 1939—thus providing a reason, or at least a pretext, for Hitler's war against the European Jews. Obviously only one of these versions can be correct, but

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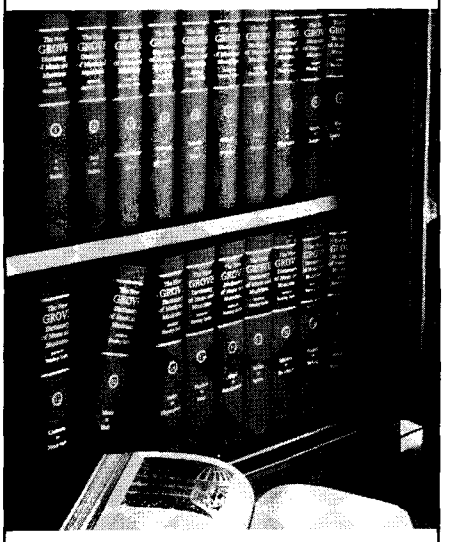

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Fried seems not terribly bothered.

Noam Chomsky also wrote a letter in Allen's support. So did Maxime Rodinson, a French scholar on Islam, best known perhaps for a Marxist interpretation of the prophet Muhammad. None of these is an unqualified endorsement. Fried, who writes that "I am envious that I have not written it myself," still observes that "perhaps in one or two places a couple of words could be changed," and notes that "some individual young Zionists . . . did fight against the Nazis." Rodinson expresses "some doubts," and worries that "some of J. Allen's statements . . . seemed to me a bit schematic," and relates that in any case he was in Lebanon, far away from the catastrophe, during the Second World War. Chomsky, offended by "totalitarian critics," offers his support, though he is still "looking forward to a chance to read the play." He declares that anyway he will "not comment on the contents explicitly," a wise decision after his unfortunate experience with a similar defense of Robert Faurisson, a French writer who went considerably further than Jean-Marie Le Pen and claimed that there had been no Nazi genocide of European Jewry.

Perdition was to have been performed in the Royal Court Theatre in London in January 1987 but was canceled at the last minute; it has been subsequently shown (or read) at the Edinburgh Festival (and elsewhere, I believe) without attracting great attention. The cancellation was explained by the author and his friends as the result of Jewish pressure, because his play, according to Allen, is the "most lethal attack on Zionism ever written, because it touches the heart of the most abiding myth of modern history, the holocaust."

Critics of Allen's play in the British media insisted that it was an outrage, that it was based on lies and distortions. According to a writer in the *New Statesman*, it suggested that the Jews deserved what they got from the Nazis, that they were responsible for the horror they suffered:

> The remorseless unveiling of unpalatable events unleashes a kind of rage in the reader. . . . One searches for an outlet and "blame" is a word that Allen has continually attached not to the Nazis but to Jews, their Jewish leaders, Zionists. . . . It is the venerable psychological mechanism by which the victim stands accused: the rape victim soliciting violence; the unemployed foolishly obeying the trade unions.

(Is this the "totalitarian" criticism of which Chomsky complains?)

Another critic argued that as a matter of principle it was wrong to use the theater to present a thesis that can be judged only on the basis of its factual accuracy. If the author had a historical argument to make, he should have written a book; one could then pause for reflection, and for comparison with the sources, which cannot be done in the theater.

NOW WE have a book. There is not much point in taking issue with Allen. His play is crudely written; his interest in Jews and Zionism seems to be very recent, and not very deep. But Lenni Brenner, whose "gold mine" gave Allen the materials for his play, is a different matter. *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* is an account, in considerable detail, of a great many misdeeds by Zionists from Herzl onward. The book has many footnotes, as well as other trappings of an objective, scholarly study. But they are only trappings. Some of Brenner's book is invented, some is exaggerated or drawn out of context, some is accurate. Brenner's rogues' gallery is, in fact, incomplete; apparently he does not read languages other than English. True scholars might have found still more leads and references.

Even if all his facts were correct, Brenner's book would not be a serious study of Zionism, any more than a collection of profiles in scurrility from Benedict Arnold to Al Capone would be a serious history of the United States. There has never been a political movement that was always right in its political assessments, that never committed errors, whose entire membership consisted of men and women of saintly character. It is quite true that some Zionists should not have looked for Mussolini's support, even in the 1920s; they were grievously mistaken to do so. But they were in the good company of many European left-wingers, not least Shaw and Wells; the Soviets too had excellent relations with fascist Italy, and for a while Mussolini was considered by the democracies a counterweight against Hitler. It is true, moreover, that German Zionists did not fully understand the meaning of Hitler when he came to power in 1933. Some of their comments and declarations make embarrassing reading 50 years later. But the same is true for the Jewish anti-Zionists of the assimilationist and religious camps. Indeed, the same is true for the Communists, and for just about everyone else.

Allen and Brenner are not historians. But they must know that bibliographies, documents, and footnotes can be used to prove almost anything in the world. These two Trotskyites are bound to know that even a beginner could prepare a history of "Trotskyism in the age of the dictators" based on thousands of citations, court proceedings, quotations from books, periodicals, and newspapers, "proving" that the Trotskyites were all self-confessed collaborators with the Gestapo, as well as with the Japanese and British secret services. Or, given another set of facts, more difficult to refute, an account of Trotskyism could be written—indeed it has been written—that portrayed the history of the movement as an unending chain of penetration from top to bottom by the GPU (later the KGB), a saga of betrayal and murder.

IN FACT this literature on Nazi-Zionist collaboration is not entirely new. During the last two decades, it has become fairly routine in the Soviet Union; A. Z. Romanenko's *The Class Essence of Zionism* (1986) is the most recent example. In view of the Soviet-German pact of 1939 (which made Hitler's war possible), in view of the innumerable declarations about what Molotov called the "friendship of the two governments and peoples cemented in blood," one would expect a certain degree of circumspection about allegations of Zionist "collaboration" with the Nazis. But for the Ro-

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this woman, in her great unlikening,
avows it: that the body is a house.
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like a chandelier under a dance floor,
she has made the grotesquerie of fate so clear
no one can mistake it for her.
She has it right: fail, be hated, die.
I have wanted to be her, saying
I am a shrine, I am a bad restaurant,
I am final under the disastrous sky.
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JAMES RICHARDSON

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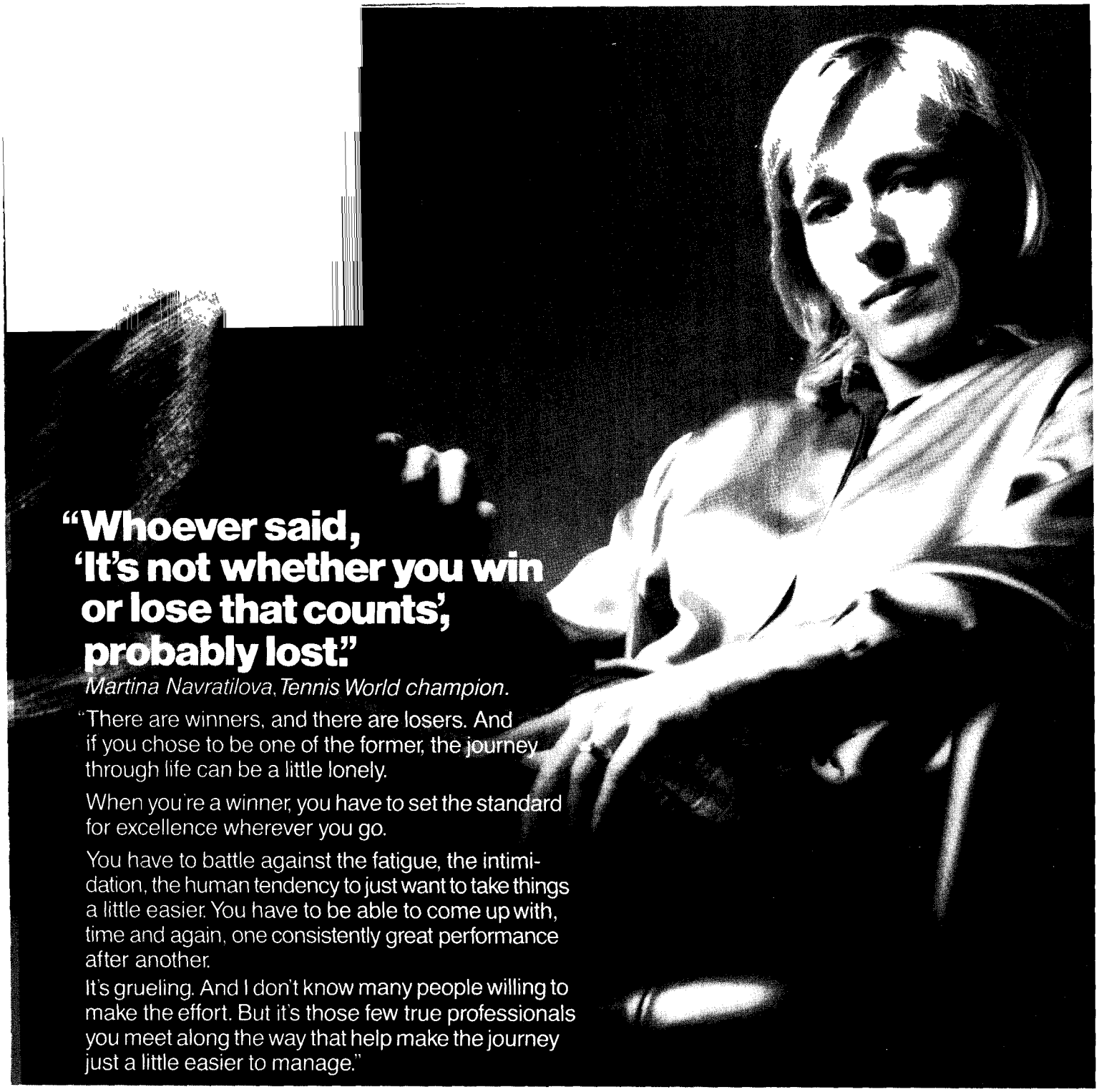

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manenkos, "Zionism" is no more than a code word; and a code word is necessary, since openly anti-Jewish pronouncements are frowned upon by the Soviet authorities. Romanenko operates on the basis of a set of facts similar to Brenner's; but unlike Brenner, he does not really care about "Zionism," let alone its "class essence." For him Trotsky was as much a Zionist as Herzl, and poor Jews are as detestable as rich Jews. In fact, he hates the Jews more than he hates Hitler and the Nazis, who, according to his account, were merely put up by Jews to attack the Soviet Union.

Still, the Soviet Union did at least belatedly come into the war. The Trotskyites, by contrast, never supported the war against Nazism, which was an imperialist war as far as they were concerned. Thus "objectively" (to use the horrible term of the Communist dictionary of the 1930s), the Trotskyites bear a direct responsibility for Nazism and the Holocaust, even though they were, of course, too weak to play an important role. And so on: a little omission and distortion here and there, and how easy it is to rewrite history.

THERE ARE subjects, however, that should be exempt from such practices. The Holocaust is surely one of them. It should not be a subject for propaganda exercises, for demagogy, for smugness, for flippancy. It could be that the Israeli judge was right when he said in the Kastner trial in the 1950s that this Hungarian-Jewish leader sold his soul to Satan when he decided to negotiate with the Germans. But it could be that the judge was wrong. As Gershom Scholem wrote in a famous letter to Hannah Arendt, some of those on the *Judenräte* (the Jewish councils appointed by the Nazis in the ghettos) were swine, others were saints. "There were among them also many people in no way different from ourselves, who were compelled to make terrible decisions in circumstances that we cannot even begin to reproduce or reconstruct. I do not know whether they were right or wrong. Nor do I presume to judge. I was not there."

Recently I came across a report written by Judah Magnes in 1944 that made essentially the same point. Magnes, the leading advocate of a binational state in Palestine, was a public figure of almost unworldly purity, which may explain his lack of political support. Having returned from Constantinople, where he learned about the situation in Nazi-occupied Europe, he wrote: "I do not envy the people who have to decide who will be chosen to emigrate. There are a hundred—and they can select only ten. If I would see my father among the hundred or relations of mine or friends, I would pick them. The matter is so natural—and so utterly horrible."

Allen and Brenner, however, are eager judges. *They* would not have talked to the Germans, *they* would not have selected their political friends, *they* would have gone with them to the gas chambers. Allen and Brenner are admirable men.

TO RETURN, then, to their argument: the real issue is not Rudolf Kastner, not Budapest, 1944. "That one Zionist betrayed the Jews would not be of any moment," Brenner writes; "no movement is responsible for its renegades." The argument of Allen's play and Brenner's book is that the "working philosophy" of the Zionists was to betray the Jewish masses, and to deliver them to the Nazi extermination machine. The evidence is presented in two basic categories, ideological and diplomatic. Zionist doctrine was nationalist. So was Nazi ideology. Ergo, they were allies. With the same logic one could argue that since the Nazis and the Communists and the Trotskyites all opposed the Versailles peace treaty, they were identical.

Brenner focuses on certain Zionist renegades such as Georg Kareski, a German Jewish revisionist leader, who did negotiate with the Nazi authorities without having been authorized to do so by anybody, for which he was bitterly attacked and isolated. Kareski was a self-important fool, but his plan was hardly to hand over his fellow Jews to the crematories of Auschwitz. He proposed, rather, the evacuation of all German Jews over a period of 25 years—a utopian project, but not a murderous one.

The Kareski affair gets a chapter in Brenner's book, but it does not appear in *Perdition*. The story of one Nathan Schwalb, on the other hand, is absolutely crucial for the play. Allen and Brenner have to show that the Zionist leaders deliberately sabotaged the rescue efforts during the war. But there is no speech, article, memorandum, or document that incriminates Weizmann or Ben-Gurion or any other Zionist leader in this way. Allen and Brenner must have felt greatly relieved, therefore, when they unearthed an account of a letter written by Nathan Schwalb, then residing in Switzerland, to two Slovakian Jewish leaders, Rabbi

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Dov Ber Weissmandel and Mrs. Gisi Fleischmann.

These Jewish leaders thought they could bribe certain Gestapo officials to stop, or at least to delay, the deportations to Auschwitz. They asked Schwalb, a liaison between the Jewish youth movements in Palestine and their comrades in Nazi-occupied Europe, for money to do so. They received some money, but not remotely as much as they had requested. They wanted millions of dollars, but Schwalb's budget consisted of a few thousand. But they did apparently receive a letter from Schwalb, which included this passage:

> About the cries coming from your country, we should know that all the allied nations are spilling much of their blood, and if we do not sacrifice any blood, by what right shall we come to the bargaining table when they divide nations and lands at the war's end? Therefore it is silly, even impudent, on our part to ask these nations who are spilling their blood to permit their money into enemy countries in order to protect our blood.

Let us pause here for a moment. What if Schwalb did write such a letter? He was a young man, one of several emissaries to smuggle letters, parcels, and also some money to Poland and Slovakia. A letter of this kind would have been a manifestation of incredible insensitivity and cruelty, but no fair-minded observer could possibly make the Zionist leadership responsible for the private letter of an individual of whom they had never even heard.

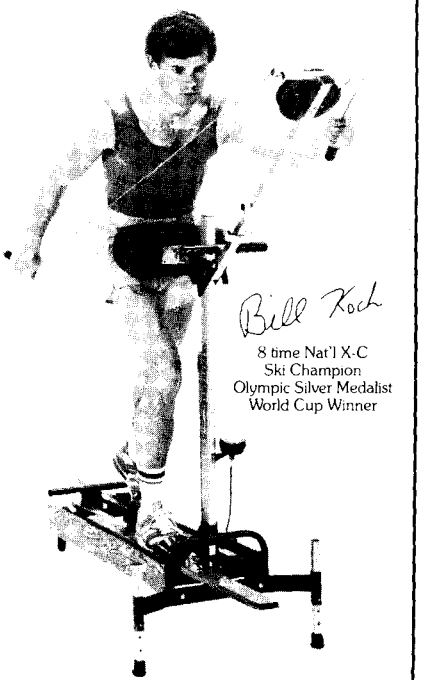
But the story does not end here. Neither Allen nor Brenner ever saw the incriminating letter, nor indeed did anyone else. For the letter does not exist. They base their allegations on a book written by Weissmandel years after the war, in which the alleged letter is quoted from memory. That is all. Nor can we be certain that Weissmandel even wrote the book in question; it appeared after his death, and was put together by some of his friends and followers.

IS IT conceivable that the Zionists wanted the murder of their fellow Jews? That they sought the destruction of their own comrades? This makes sense only on the assumption that they were not merely unspeakably wicked, but also raving mad. To build a country one needs people, after all; and the Zionists were above all building a country. The Jews of Europe were the raison d'être of the state that the Zionists wished to establish.

I can add a personal note. Some years ago, while working in the archives of the International Red Cross in Geneva, I came across letters from Weissmandel and Fleischmann addressed to Nathan Schwalb. There emerged the picture of a young man who worked indefatigably under the most difficult conditions to save people in the occupied countries, a modest, self-effacing man who felt more acutely than most people the pain of the catastrophe, the kind of man who in any other country would have received a high distinction for selfless work done in war. In these letters there is not a word of recrimination (not to speak of incrimination). Quite the contrary, there are many expressions of gratitude for the help Schwalb provided. And since my own research, more such letters have been unearthed by an Israeli scholar, Dina Porath, whose dissertation on the rescue work of the Jewish Agency has recently appeared as a book, *Hanhaga bemilkud* (The Besieged Leadership, Tel Aviv, 1986). Porath's findings are similar to mine.

STILL, something went very wrong with this star witness for the prosecution. Allen and Brenner did not take the precaution of ascertaining whether the author of the non-existent letter was still alive. According to European and American law, it is perfectly safe to libel the dead (France is an important exception); but this is not true with regard to the living. Nathan Schwalb is alive. He is now called Nathan Dror. Thus, to their dismay, Allen and Brenner found themselves suddenly confronted with a libel action. Instead of refusing to change a single word in their manuscript, they have excised ten pages from *Perdition*. They must know that they could not possibly make their case in a court of law—or indeed, in the court of public opinion.

How to explain, though, that curious reference in the Weissmandel book to Schwalb's non-existent letter? I do not profess to have a conclusive answer. What might have happened is this: the sums involved in the proposed transaction were far beyond the means of the poor Jewish community in Palestine. Nor was it possible under wartime regulations to transfer money to enemy territory; there were the strictest controls in the United States, as well as in Britain and Palestine. In any case, it is more than doubtful that the Gestapo officials could have helped. But the Slovak Jewish lead-



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ers were clinging to every hope, to every straw; and nobody can blame them. As the weeks passed and the money failed to arrive, it is just possible that the one or the other may have assumed that there must be some sinister reason. Again, there is no way to be certain. But what if a few million had somehow been raised and somehow conveyed to Bratislava? One can well imagine the triumphant noises emanating from the Romanenkos and Brenners. What better proof, they would proclaim, for Zionist-Nazi collaboration.

BRENNER CALLS yet another witness to Zionist-Nazi collaboration. He is Feiwel Polkes, the famous agent of the Haganah, or the Jewish army in Palestine, who negotiated with Eichmann in Berlin and later acted as Eichmann's host in Haifa (for one day). This time there is real documentation. The name Polkes does appear in a report written by Eichmann to his superiors: "He [Polkes] works as his objective requires with or against the British Intelligence Service, the Sûreté Generale ... with England and Italy.... He declared himself willing to work for Germany in the form of providing intelligence as long as this does not oppose his own political goals."

Who was this master spy? Who did he represent? Brenner obviously has no idea, otherwise he would not have touched him with a barge pole. I must confess that I had not heard of Polkes prior to the Eichmann trial, which I found surprising, for I happened to be a young journalist in Palestine during the period before the state came into being. The Jewish community was small then. The Haganah was even smaller; it was what the sociologists call a "face-to-face community." Had Polkes been a Haganah member of any consequence, one would have known at least his name. But I knew nobody who knew Polkes. For a while I believed he was a figment of Eichmann's imagination. After some research, however, it appeared that there had indeed been a man by this name, a junior employee at the Haifa chamber of commerce. He never acted on behalf of the Haganah, but as a sideline he operated as an informant for anybody who was willing to part with a few dollars. The world of the late '30s was full of such characters, some petty crooks, some imposters, some in the business mainly for excitement, darkly hinting that they had information of the utmost importance—the type unforgettably played by Peter Lorre.

On a trip to Germany in 1937, Polkes contacted Eichmann and introduced himself as an agent of the Haganah. He did this in the erroneous belief that Eichmann and his friends would help him with a business deal. The affair could have provided inspiration to Eric Ambler, for there was nothing to it but hot air. The activities of the Haganah, after all, are thoroughly documented in the archives; the idea that a relationship with the Germans could have been kept secret for 50 years after the event is as outlandish as the belief that David Ben-Gurion, Eliahu Golomb, and the other leaders of the Haganah would have entrusted a small-time operator with negotiations of such importance and delicacy.

Had Brenner done his homework he would have found (as Porath did) that at one point a member of the Zionist executive did indeed suggest a direct approach to the German ambassador in Ankara. This was much later, in 1944, and the intention was to prevent the deportation of Hungarian Jewry. The suggestion was voted down by the Zionist authorities as incompatible with Jewish national pride, and it was a German Zionist, Werner Senator, who happened to be the most extreme opponent of the idea that a Jew should meet face to face with the ambassador.

IT WAS a noble sentiment. It kept Zionist hands clean. But was it really the right decision? Of course the Germans would probably not have agreed, and the British, the mandatory power in Palestine, would not have permitted such talks. But would it have been morally indefensible to negotiate with the enemy if there was the slightest possibility of saving lives? Until the outbreak of the war, and for some time after, there was indeed a common interest between the Nazis and the Zionists: both wanted the Jews out of Germany. And there was no way to get people out of Germany, and later out of German-occupied Europe, except through some form of understanding with the tyrants in Berlin. British, French, American, and Soviet leaders met with the Nazis. There would have been every justification in the world for Jewish leaders to do the same. For the issue at stake was not economic, cultural, or military collaboration; it was averting the certain deaths of many thousands. The saving of human lives should have been more important than national pride. The assertion that such

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attempts should not have been made is nothing but hypocritical posturing many years after the event.

Most Zionists did not realize swiftly enough the full magnitude of the disaster that befell the Jews in Europe during the Second World War. The same is true of everybody else. It is also true that no stone should have been left unturned in the effort to rescue the doomed. But the Zionists did get some essential things right. They anticipated, at least to some extent, the impending danger; they knew that lives could be saved only by getting Jews out of Europe; and they also knew that with the Germans in physical control of most of Europe, this could not be done without the knowledge of the Germans. The Zionists succeeded only to a pitifully small extent. Others succeeded even less.

WHAT IS THE alternative presented by Brenner with the benefit of hindsight? He makes two practical suggestions. An alliance between the Communist Party of America and the World Jewish Congress would have "galvanized the Jewish community," and many non-Jewish anti-Nazis would have moved together with them "to beat Hitler." His other suggestion is even more ridiculous. It is an endorsement of a comment by Trotsky, who foresaw in December 1938 the physical annihilation of the Jews in the coming war, and stated that

> only audacious mobilization of the workers against reaction, creation of workers militias, direct physical resistance to the fascist gangs, increasing self-confidence, activity, and audacity on the part of all the oppressed can provoke a change in the relation of forces, stop the world wave of fascism, and open a new chapter in the history of mankind.

By 1938, however, the world was not facing "fascist gangs," but tank divisions and fleets of bombers. The idea that these could be stopped by workers militias is breathtaking. Some mitigating circumstances can perhaps be found for the misjudgments of the aging revolutionary in Mexico, cut off from events in Europe. To dredge up this nonsense 50 years after the event, and to present it as some higher wisdom, is unforgivable.

Among the books from which he drew his inspiration, Allen mentions Isaac Deutscher's *The Non-Jewish Jew*. Deutscher was a Trotskyite in pre-war Poland, and he did not become a friend of Israel after the war. But he was honest enough to admit later, in 1954, that "if, instead of arguing against Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s, I had urged European Jews to go to Palestine I might have helped to save some of the lives that were later extinguished in Hitler's gas chambers." Instead he admonished them to participate in European class struggles, to put their trust in the anti-fascist workers militias, as Brenner would have had them do.

Of Deutscher's contrition there is nothing, of course, in Allen and Brenner. On the contrary, some of their manifest absurdities stem precisely from anger about the political bankruptcy of their own movement in the pre-war years. There may be other reasons too. The historical facts about the Holocaust and rescue, about collaboration and resistance, have been known since the end of the war. How, then, to explain that plays such as Allen's and books such as Brenner's appeared with a delay of almost five decades? Simply, perhaps: in the 1950s many of those who lived through these events were still alive, and there were obvious limits to falsification. Today only a few are left who can stand up and bear witness. And how to explain this special venom against Zionism? In the first decades after the war, Zionism meant Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, Palmach and the kibbutzim. Today Kahane and the Gush Emunim have been brought to the forefront by the media. That is regrettable, of course; but it should not affect the historical record.

If rational argument and historiographical honesty had a significant impact, the discussion about these writers and their canard should end here and now. But there is no reasoning against the compulsion of people whose minds are closed; arguments do not refute them, ridicule does not hurt them. John Locke, who gave much thought to the nature of rational argument, once defined the difference between madmen and idiots by pointing to the fact that the former have not lost the faculty of reasoning, "but having joined together some ideas very wrongly, they mistake them for truths." Thus their arguments are truly irrefutable. They will always have readers and listeners.

WALTER LAQUEUR

Walter Laqueur is chairman of the International Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a professor at Georgetown.

dissent

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(Knopf, 144 pp., $15.95)

The history in *History in Sherman Park* is a painted backdrop, a flat vista meant to add a semblance of depth. First seen in the *New Yorker*, this book is actually an informal piece of political sociology, a print documentary narrated by amateur pollster Jonathan Schell. In his pleas for peace, *The Fate of the Earth* and *The Abolition*, Schell cast himself as a warning cry on a lonely coast alerting us to approaching thunder, metal rain. Here he's marginally more sociable. In 1984 Schell pried himself from his pew at the *New Yorker*—where he was writer, editor, mystic druid—to pay a call on a household in the heartland of America. His mission? To take a reading on the mood and the drift of the Republic during the presidential race between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale. He wished to address that age-old question: Whither America?

This quiz was also a carry-over of Schell's concerns from his disarmament tracts, since he believed that the slightest burp from armed America might trigger The End ("so the continuation of human life, too, was—fantastically—at issue in the election"). He decided to eschew the froth and thrash of media opinion. Rather than ride the wild surf of big "mo" and little "mo," Schell bird-dogged democracy at work to the front lawn of Bill and Gina Gapolinsky (not their real names) of Sherman Park, Wisconsin, a mostly Catholic sector of Milwaukee. His would be a microstudy of the election, their living room his laboratory. "Instead of finding out a little about a lot of votes, I wanted to find out everything I could about a handful of votes." Yet the Gapolinskys were more than lab mice:

> [If] in going to Sherman Park to talk with Gina and Bill Gapolinsky I was in one sense seeking out people at the bottom of the political hierarchy—people far from the centers of influence and power, on the receiving end of the government's decisions—I was in another sense seeking out people who, under our system, are at the very pinnacle of power. It was not the president, or the senators, or the representatives who would decide, ultimately, whether taxes would be raised or lowered, whether the poor would be helped or abandoned, whether the world would end or go on; it was Gina and Bill. Whatever their level of interest, or concern, or information, their decisions were the ones that stuck. They were the American sovereign. They were the American king.

Our first view of the American king is not auspicious. "Bill Gapolinsky greeted me at the door, in brown slacks and a T-shirt decorated with a picture of an overflowing stein of beer and, below it, the word 'BEER.' " But Bill soon sheds his party-hearty guise and reveals himself to be "a sober, opaque, impassive citizen." Wife Gina is more pert and bubbly. But both live in the flimsy present. They don't save. Bill: "People talk about putting money away for the future, but—hey—I don't." They barely keep abreast. "Once, when he was in college, Bill said, he had had a subscription to *U.S. News and World Report*, and had found its articles admirably 'short and to the point.' Later, he had tried *Newsweek*, but had found its articles too long and detailed."

As for cultural interests, well—"For a while, Bill and Gina became mildly addicted to playing video games. They both particularly liked Ms. Pac Man." Right off the bat the reader knows he's not going to listen to stately expressions of confraternity evolved from ancient Greece, nope. And since the reader already knows the result of the Reagan/Mondale race, the sole tease in *History in Sherman Park* is how Bill and Gina will cast their individual votes. Even this drama is half-foregone. While Bill wobbles toward Reagan, Gina has her mind made up for Mondale. " 'Definitely Mondale,' she said. 'I guess I'm just a social-welfare-type person.' "

With only Bill's vote up for grabs, Schell has ample time to poke around the neighborhood and play reporter. He seems to have a Geiger counter implanted in his head, calibrated to detect microclicks of anxiety. There is anxiety in Sherman Park, about money, crime, health, education, nuclear war. But mostly Schell finds a fog of apathy, a cuddly drift. "I encountered no fanati-

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cism in Milwaukee. On the contrary, people's views tended, if anything, to be muted, amorphous, and mild." Indeed, if not for Schell's instigation, the political talk in Sherman Park might be nil. "Wherever I went in Milwaukee, I talked to people about politics, but I found little evidence that people talked about politics among themselves." Even Bill and Gina tend to talk politics only when Schell prods. In a rare sputter of rhetoric, Schell prophesies that this void will spawn a reckoning. America cannot continue as a zombie, sunk in torpor and denial, seeking refuge in the narcotic light of TV. "[Reality] looks at us from behind the glass wall of the television screen, leaving us free, if we so wish, not to think about it at all—at least until such time as it bursts through the screen and vaporizes us where we sit." That'll teach us.

ONE OF THE drawbacks of the book is Schell's own lack of presence: he is himself already vaporized, a little cloud of worry that collects at the doorstep. Of course nobody expects Schell to create his own electromagnetic field, like Norman Mailer or Hunter Thompson. But he's so self-effacing and marshmallowy that his writing has a blobby lack of flavor. As a reporter he's astral and aloof, more comfortable with The People in the abstract than in the fleshy particular. The residents of Sherman Park never bloom to blooded life—they're ghostly afterimages.

The only active thing Schell brought to Sherman Park was his civic mind. That civic mind is part of Schell's soft luggage from the *New Yorker*, along with his mushy liberal bias. It's hardly an accident that the bogeyman in this book is the co-chairman of the Reagan-Bush campaign in Wisconsin, who argues that the Bomb is just an angry memo from God. The Democrats, by contrast, tend to be Hush Puppies. But then Schell too is a Hush Puppy, "a social-welfare-type." It's not his liberal bias I mind, it's his not admitting it.

Bias colors his judgment of Bill and Gina. Schell drops numerous hints that he considers Bill a fat aspirin. And Bill does sound like a pontificating pellet. " 'Most news people and objective people would have to say that Mondale won [the debate].' Bill said this in judicious tones, as if he were giving a report." Bill's real offense is that his prosperous rise in business (a former cookie salesman, he was promoted to district manag-

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Zionism — Is It Racism?

Twelve years ago, the United Nations General Assembly passed by overwhelming vote a Resolution that equated Zionism with racism, something to be condemned by all people and by all nations. It was the highwater mark of public anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism. Does this Resolution have any validity?

What are the facts?

■ Before deciding whether Zionism can be equated with racism, it's important to determine what Zionism really is. It's the philosophy and the movement whose purpose for almost 2000 years has been to restore Zion, the ancient land of Israel to the Jewish people, as its ancestral national homeland. Through centuries of wars, devastation, exile, dispersion and persecution, Zion never ceased to be the heart of Jewish yearning and survival. It was only as Eretz Israel, as Zion, that this land entered into the historical, cultural and spiritual consciousness of the world.
■ Jews have lived in the Holy Land since Biblical times and without interruption. They are the original and the oldest settlers. But it wasn't until late in the last century that this love for Zion found expression in a political movement. It was founded by Theodor Herzl, a totally "emancipated" Austrian Jew, a playwright and journalist. His intellect, vision and energy, his personal magnetism and organizational talents gave expression and action to the age-old Jewish longing for Zion. Modern political Zionism was born. The ingathering of the children of Israel into their ancestral homeland had begun.
■ Sparked by their ancient yearning and by Herzl's vision, tens of thousands of European Jews left for Palestine and transformed it into what Israel is today — a land of verdant fields, lush forests, productive industries and flourishing cities.
■ How about "racism"? It is a defamation of the Jewish faith to link it with this evil concept. It is incompatible with the doctrines of Jewish civilization, enunciated over 3000 years ago in the Holy Bible, in which all mankind is traced to a single human being, created by God in His own image. The two greatest sufferers from the plague of racism have been the Blacks and the Jewish people. It's only today that this cruel yoke has been lifted from the Blacks. The fate of the Jews, as victims of racism, was even more cruel. Because wherever they lived in the Old World, it was only at the sufferance of their overlords — always subject to living in ghettos, having no access to education, being restricted to few and humiliating occupations, and always victims of persecution, murder, rape, confiscation and exile.
■ The suffering of the Jews as victims of racism reached its terrible climax during the Holocaust of the second World War, perpetrated by the German Nazi machine. The Jews of Europe were liquidated in the most horrible manner imaginable — six million of them altogether. The terms "Holocaust" and "Genocide" had to be coined to express this unprecedented disaster, this bizarre expression of hatred and racism.
■ Racism is totally contrary to Jewish philosophy and Jewish thinking. Jews have been and still are on the forefront of the fight for racial justice in the United States, in South Africa and all over the world. The state of Israel is founded on racial equality. And how could it be otherwise? Close to 60% of the population of Israel are what we would call "non-Caucasians". Can such a state be racist? The question is preposterous and the answer is obvious.
■ Israel has been and continues to be a leader in policies that attest to its "non-racism". It has pioneered a hugely effective development program in 31 Black African countries. Israel has organized similar development programs in such countries as Thailand, Burma, the Philippines and Singapore. It was among the first countries to take in Vietnamese boat people. Israel has absorbed into its society hundreds of thousands of refugees from all over the world and without any reference to their race. Among them are the Black Jews of India, Oriental Jews from all Arab countries, and most recently more than 10,000 Black Ethiopian Jews who were air-lifted to freedom in Israel, in a daring rescue operation.

The disgusting equation that "Zionism = Racism" was foisted on the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Arab nations and by the Soviet bloc. It has no basis in fact. Israel is a multi-racial society in which all races, including the resident Arabs and Druze, are treated equally, are represented to the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), and hold important official and diplomatic positions. For instance, the Israeli Consul General in Atlanta is an Arab. Racism is totally contrary to the tenets of the Jewish religion and to the unwritten constitution of Israel. How does that compare to Israel's accusers? The Soviet bloc keeps its Jews in bondage by not allowing them to emigrate. The Arabs have for the most part expelled all Jews from their countries and don't even allow Jewish visitors. They were the slave masters of yesteryear and some are reported to practice slavery even today. They are mercilessly exploiting Black Africa and other developing countries by their inflated oil prices. For them to say that Zionism is racism is a travesty and an insult to the intelligence of the world.

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er) has given him a snootful of airs. "In general, Bill associated racial prejudice with lack of education and with economic unsuccesses, and was glad that his own rise in the world had freed him from intolerance."

Bill also prides himself on the distance he has put between himself and his blue-collar brethren. "When I saw that most college-educated people are Republican, it made me feel like I guess I'm part of that—like I'm a little more educated, a little better than the rest, like I'm a little above all those working-class high-school graduates." Is Bill a class traitor? Schell would never be crass enough to say so. But the inference is that Bill's vote for Reagan would be a rebuke to the liberal ethos of Sherman Park, an attempt to swim upstream with the silver fishies. Compared with Bill, Gina certainly emerges as more genuine, spunky, and inner-directed. She's steadfast too, the only "serene liberal" Schell met in Sherman Park.

BUT BILL, at least, is aware of harsh choices. Gina is off on a breeze, a chirpy ditz from dreamland. Asked about Watergate, she responds, "I have no memory of it. There were so many *names*. My body was changing rapidly. I was interested in interpersonal things. I was more concerned with whether I could find a sweater that matched my skirt than I was with anything political." Like Tammy Faye, Gina has shoppin' demons that are hoppin'. "There were few things she liked better . . . than to go into a clothing store with a walletful of money and spend it." The most interesting exchange in the book, the *only* interesting exchange in the book, comes when Bill lowers the boom on Gina's spending sprees. "The truth is," Bill booms, "*you* won't *stand* for having anything less than we have, materially. In fact, you won't even stand for having as much as we already have, because you want more." Her liberal idealism is a luxury, a soap-bubbly irrelevancy, made possible by him busting his hump in the trenches. "The *reason* Gina feels she can afford *not* to think about how the issue affects her is because I *do*." I would award that round to Bill; but Schell gives Gina the last word in the quarrel, and in the book's concluding sentence he makes her vote for Mondale sound like a selfless act. "And Gina, still unable to calculate her vote on the basis of her interest, voted for Mondale."

Now, wait. *Everyone* has self-interest, a stake in growth, safety, prosperity, justice, health. Altruism has its limits; and the tendency of too many Democrats has been to dither on a high moral plane. Idealism without content will only pull in iridescent dreamers like Gina. Jonathan Schell is too drab to be iridescent, but as *The Fate of the Earth* and *The Abolition* showed, he has no feel for the shake and the howdy of politics. He wishes to change the course of mighty rivers without getting his hands dirty. He seems content to stare at a potential sea of "sober, opaque, impassive" citizens. His approach to politics, like his attempts at prose, bears a noble slump of futility. His shoulders are hunched with the weight of nuclear dread.

It was Evelyn Waugh who warned, "A writer must face the choice of becoming an artist or a prophet. He can shut himself up at his desk and selfishly seek pleasure in the perfecting of his own skill or he can pace about, dictating dooms and exhortations on the topics of the day." A prophet in *The Fate of the Earth*, a pacer in *History in Sherman Park*, Schell has made his choice; the pity is, he hasn't managed to make his choice interesting. The best you can say about him is that he cares and wants us to care. In his own way he's an admirable worrywart. He's just so boring about it.

Boring, and a trifle lazy. The sympathetic ear Schell lent Sherman Park might have sufficed for a magazine article, but from a book one expects more legwork and mental digging (especially if one is expected to shell out $15.95). Being nearer to the 1988 election than the 1984 landslide, we deserve an afterword or an epilogue that offers some future projection. What does it say about America that its "king" is a couch potato, apolitical and uninformed? What does it portend for liberalism that its sole true believer in Sherman Park is a fluffhead? In *The End of the Conservative Era: Liberalism After Reagan*, the historian Robert S. McElvaine recently conjectured that the blue-collar hollers of Bruce Springsteen might help seed a liberal revival. Is Sherman Park ready to rock? Is Schell? Who knows? Who cares? Far as I can tell, Schell hasn't added a single extra lick to this material since it first appeared in the *New Yorker*. It's as if this pristine text were meant to be preserved in a time capsule, or in an honored place in the bomb shelter.

The book does have a funny throwaway moment, though. Asked by Schell why they're supporting Reagan, a troop of teenage boys in blazers respond: "I like him because he's old." "I like his hair." "My allowance goes further."

"My allowance goes further." Now *that's* self-interest.

JAMES WOLCOTT

James Wolcott writes regularly for *Vanity Fair*.

PROUST'S PRIEST

On Reading Ruskin
by Marcel Proust
translated and edited by Jean Autret, William Burford, and Phillip J. Wolfe, with an introduction by Richard Macksey

(Yale University Press, 173 pp., $19.95)

Among authors who exercised a decisive influence on Marcel Proust between 1897 and 1907, when he began gestating *A la recherche du temps perdu*, John Ruskin stands foremost. Not only was Proust somehow able to decipher Ruskin's major works with the small English at his command; he also translated two of them, and for these two—*The Bible of Amiens* and *Sesame and Lilies*—wrote long prefaces and numerous footnotes that yield the credenda that sustained him during 16 years of reclusion.

By 1897 it had become abundantly clear that Proust, as he turned 26, would not embrace any of the careers open to young men of his class. He studied law but, like Balzac and Flaubert before him, never practiced it. He attended the Ecole des Sciences Politiques, but found gov-

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ernment service uncongenial. Dr. Adrien Proust helped him obtain an unpaid librarianship at the Bibliothèque Mazarine, but even this semblance of professional life seemed onerous. All he had to show for himself as a literary aspirant lay in one volume, and *Les plaisirs et les jours*, with its wry allusion to Hesiod, weighed short against the expectations of his father. A much weightier argument was illness. Having developed asthma during childhood, he fell victim once again to the disease, which kept him increasingly housebound, in a house that hung on his breath. Thereafter, Proust wrote at night rather than by day.

For his radical break with time as others lived it, he acquired the sanction of religious authority from Ruskin, and, indeed, Proust reading *The Stones of Venice* and *The Bible of Amiens* applied himself to that formidable task like a catechumen studying Holy Writ. He traveled abroad in the same spirit. No pilgrim on the outskirts of Jerusalem ever felt more hopeful that salvation lay at hand than Proust entering Venice in April 1900. "Blessed days," he later wrote,

> when with other disciples of the master I listened at the water's edge to his gospel, alighting at every one of the temples which seemed to rise from the sea expressly to offer us the object of his descriptions and the very image of his thoughts.

Where Ruskin once dwelt, there lay the possibility of transcendence through a mind or eye that saw beyond mere sight. Rouen, Abbeville, Chartres, Amiens were not just historical monuments. They were places for communion with the aesthete who, in his wanderings outside philistine Europe, had traced a new Holy Land and prescribed, by example, an initiatory discipline. "The beauty to which he consecrated his life," Proust declared, "was not conceived by him as an object of enjoyment made for our delight, but as a reality infinitely more important than life, for which he would have sacrificed his own." In Amiens, before he let himself gaze at its cathedral, Proust staged the encounter by following Ruskin's exact approach route, as if to impersonate a sensibility more exquisite than his own, and to achieve, through such mimicry, some fuller state of being.

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A FULLER STATE of being was fundamental to Ruskinian aesthetics, which rested on the belief that "all great art is the expression of man's delight in God's work, not in his own." For Ruskin, greatness manifested itself preeminently during the Middle Ages, with the growth of cathedrals whose detail and structure embody an innocence mankind lost in rising up against nature. That innocence made cathedral art what art was seldom again to be—"organic." So Ruskin put it in a famous chapter in *The Stones of Venice* entitled "The Nature of the Gothic," where architecture translates a kind of ontological fantasy. "It is one of the chief virtues of the Gothic builders that they have never suffered ideas of outside symmetries and consistencies to interfere with the real use and value of what they did," he wrote:

> If they wanted a window, they opened one; a room they added one . . . utterly regardless of any established conventionalities of external appearance. . . . Every successive architect, employed upon a great work, built the pieces he added in his own way, utterly regardless of the style adopted by his predecessors. . . . These marked variations were, however, only permitted as part of the great system of perpetual change which ran through every member of Gothic design, and rendered it as endless a field for the beholder's inquiry as for the builder's imagination.

The modern artist answers willy-nilly to a canon established by previous generations, but the Gothic builder permitted no "other" to limit him or tutor his soul. Unmindful of appearances and heedless of paternal law, he was himself the holy vessel he helped create. This identity crumbled when, during the Renaissance, historical consciousness advened, for consciousness of what tradition held sacred and of what society thought proper—of what ruled before and of what swayed outside—provoked internal conflict. One indivisible became one divided, which is to say that after his Fall the artist became a homo duplex drifting waiflike through time. Where formerly he had been consubstantial with nature, now, trapped in simulacra, he beheld it from afar.

Throughout Ruskin's work, reason figures as an impediment to some power within that urges on those it conquers an immediate vision of reality. Ultimate knowledge is won not by the mind grasping but by the mind yielding, and for proof Ruskin adduced his own mystical experience, which had taken place under a tree at Fontainebleau. "There was nothing . . . but the blue sky through the thin branches, [and I] lay down on the bank by the roadside to see if I could sleep," he recounted much later in *Praeterita*:

> But I couldn't, and the branches against the blue sky began to interest me, motionless as the branches of a tree of Jesse on a painted window. . . . Languidly, but not idly, I began to draw it; and as I drew, the languor passed away; the beautiful lines insisted on being traced—without weariness. More and more beautiful they became, as each rose out of the rest, and took its place in the air. With wonder increasing every instant, I saw that they "composed" themselves, by finer laws than any known of men. At last the tree was there, and everything I had thought before about trees, nowhere.

NURTURED ON the Gospel by his devout mother, who had him recite verses every day, Ruskin, even after he forsook evangelical Protestantism, preserved a belief in revealed truth. It found expression otherwise in a theory of unconscious creation according to which art or nature divulges itself through seers who cannot but speak the Word. From men such as these, images spring with prophetic force, like dreams that make perfect nonsense of the distinction between inner life and outside world. "Very often the mental vision is, I believe, in men of imagination, clearer than the bodily one," he wrote,

> but vision it is, of one kind or another—the whole scene, character, or incident passing before them as in second sight, whether they will or no, and requiring them to paint it as they see it; they not daring . . . to alter one jot or tittle of it as they write it down or paint it down; it being to them in its own kind and degree always a true vision or Apocalypse. . . . From a bee to Paul Veronese, all masterworkers work with this awful, this inspired consciousness.

In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the artist, wherever Proust introduces one, bears the imprint of Ruskin's paradoxes. He feels life more keenly than those in whose midst he lives, but reports to some nether world. He "mirrors" what appearances conceal, but is opaquely self-referential. Never do Vinteuil and Elstir—the one a composer, the other a painter—figure as disciples who inherit knowledge or masters who bequeath it. And so their work observes laws that constitute "a closed kingdom with un-

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traversable boundaries." Having neither paternity nor offspring, it derives its being from its very hermeticism, like the Divine Child.

Even more eloquent of this hermeticism is the life of the hero, in whom grace manifests itself when, from time to time, unbidden memories flooding his mind make him feel whole again. "An exquisite pleasure had invaded me, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin," he reflects during the "petite madeleine" episode. "At once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself. I had ceased to feel mediocre, accidental, mortal."

CENTRAL TO a narrative in which separation from mother comes as the first of many losses that forebode death, Marcel's rapture marks his artistic birth. What was buried is resurrected and the hero, miraculously pregnant with time past, delivers a being whom time cannot change, shatter, or void. All of one piece, he stands outside the phenomenal world, on consecrated ground, like some cathedral towering over a highway that leads men hither and yon. They, journeymen, build the future as they progress day by day through life, while he, the newborn artist, finds his vocation when he finds himself called to reconstruct "the immense edifice of memory."

Although that image was Proust's, there is nonetheless a shadow of it in a passage from *Praeterita* that Proust translated several years before he undertook to write *A la recherche du temps perdu*. "About the moment in the forenoon," Ruskin mused,

> when the modern fashionable traveler, intent on Paris, Nice, and Monaco and started by the morning mail from Charing Cross, has a little recovered himself from the qualms of his crossing, and the irritation of fighting for seats at Boulogne, and begins to look at his watch to see how near he is to the buffet of Amiens, he is apt to be balked and worried by the train's useless stop at one inconsiderable station, lettered ABBEVILLE. As the carriage gets in motion again, he may see, if he cares to lift his eyes for an instant from his newspaper, two square towers, with a curiously attached bit of traceried arch, dominant over the poplars and osiers of the marshy level he is traversing. Such glimpse is probably all he will ever wish to get of them; and I scarcely know how far I can make even the most sympathetic reader understand their power over my own life.

Ruskin's train making an unscheduled stop within view of St. Vulfran is not unlike Proust's tale halting for those sudden epiphanies that conjure up his forgotten past. Train and narrative both carry pleasure-bound passengers forward, all to ultimate extinction, but their loads do not include the artist. Beyond everyday life with its newspapers and profane agendas, he will have found refuge from chronology in some other realm, in an *illus tempus* that for Ruskin was the cathedral and for Proust the sacred womb of the Unconscious.

Mention should be made, though, of a "postscriptum" in which Proust decried Ruskin's formalism and sanctimoniousness. This stern critique, criticizing as well Robert De Montesquiou, the poet-aristocrat whom he once adulated, suggests that Proust could not stride into *A la recherche* except over fallen idols. Expressing the subversive side of filial piety, it served somewhat the same purpose as his sojourn at Dr. Sollier's sanatorium, where, in an attempt to cure asthma, he sought instead to impugn the means of medicine and the authority of fathers before entering his cork-lined room for good.

Not long after Proust's death, Romain Rolland, in a letter to Sigmund Freud prompted by *The Future of an Illusion*, spoke of himself as sharing with many men, if not with most, a "sensation of eternity," a feeling "of something limitless, unbounded, . . . 'oceanic' " that he declared to be the true source of religious sentiment. "I cannot discover this 'oceanic' feeling in myself," wrote Freud, by way of response, in *Civilization and its Discontents*:

> If I have understood my friend rightly, he means the same thing by it as the consolation offered by an original and somewhat eccentric dramatist to his hero who is facing a self-inflicted death. "We cannot fall out of this world." That is to say, it is a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole.

So it was that Ruskin consoled Proust when falling out of the world meant falling into it. Differences they had, but none so great as what made them

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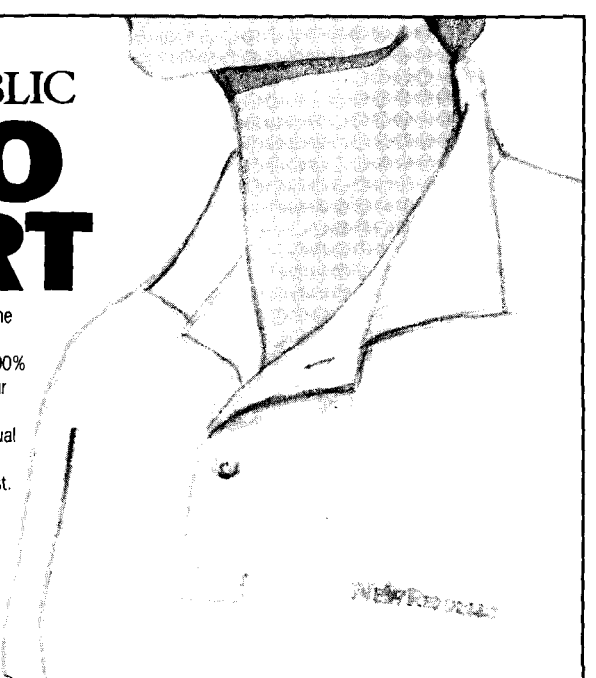

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kindred souls. Mother-ridden, they yearned for an Identity that life could not accommodate. Obsessed by death, each—like Romantics before and since—leapt inconsequently from dreams of self-envelopment to dreams of self-immolation, clearing at one bound or the other all that in the social realm argues human finiteness.

FREDERICK BROWN

Frederick Brown teaches French at S.U.N.Y., Stony Brook.

FRANK INCENSE

The Arkansas Testament by Derek Walcott

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 117 pp., $14.95)

Derek Walcott was born in St. Lucia, in the West Indies, in 1930. Of late he has lived mainly in the United States, while spending part of his time in Trinidad. The poems in the first part of his new book, a section called "Here," form a tender, sharp-edged retrospect, or more truly a writer's reunion with his birthplace and a finding of the past in the present. Though they refresh his memory, the trees, *bois canot* and *bois campêche*, mutter and hiss:

> What you wish
> from us will never be,
> your words is English,
> is a different tree.

But that is to sell English short, especially as it is used by, or uses, a poet so deeply intimate with it as Walcott. If Creole is "a tongue they speak in, but cannot write," then the writer has to seek an alternative. Every language is different, every language has its peculiar competence; there is (to employ a fashionable, bullying expression) no interlingual equivalence. Yet the English language, which has so much to give if only because it has filched so much, is chameleon-like; it possesses the mysterious ability to insinuate itself into the most alien experience. How long would it take to fit itself for an account of Martian life and landscape? And coming closer to home, consider the passage following the lines "your words is English," and what looks much like a pun in English, and then an auditory image quite as literal as it is metaphorical:

> In the rivulet's gravel
> light gutturals begin,
> in the valley, a mongrel,
> a black vowel barking . . .

Creole is at least a tongue you can write *about*. Walcott's glowing images are translations in more senses than one: water from a brass tap "plaiting in a white whip," a sea gull racing its own cry "like a squeaking pin," the "toffee-twisted minarets" of Leningrad. When we are told of a language

> garnished with conch shells,
> with a suspicion of berries in its armpits
> and elbows like flexible oars,

we can almost believe we know it, and could speak it, none the less so because "the language is that of slaves." And even though we, like Walcott, enjoy a vocabulary that allows a modern prelate to argue sophisticatedly that "there is no evil, mere misdirected will," or the poet himself to propose, in a style that is nobody's demotic, that "A steel band rolls/glissandos of surf round the hotel pool's/gazebo, doubling the moon's arc light," or to remember how, at school, mathematics "made delight Design,/arranging the thrown sticks/of stars to sine and cosine."

The diction is customarily rich, verging on the lush but never recherché, matching the oblique, swerving movement of thought and of feeling. The composition is no less sharply detailed than in the earlier "Tales of the Islands," say, but is now swifter to weave connections and more intricate. The combination of lyrical fluency and confident rhyming can betray the reader's eye into traveling faster than his understanding.

On occasion Walcott changes from a compact, almost too compressed writing to a frugal, touching simplicity. An instance of his infrequent, and delicate, use of dialect, neither patronizing nor aggressive and exclusive (the latter is more common these days), is the lovely poem "The Three Musicians," about preparing for Christmas,

> the week,
> break a lime leaf, it cold
> as an archangel's cheek,

and about Madame Isidor, who "cannot make children," and the visit of the three kings from the East:

> Three felt hats. One says,
> "*Bon Nöel*, Ma' Isidor,
>
> I am Frank Incense,
> Mr. Gold, Mr. Myrrh."
> They rest their instruments
> with care in a corner.

It is in another poem that a resigned if not mildly embittered Caribbean voice says, "Our myths are ignorance, theirs are literature." It is perfectly legitimate, in no way shabby or exploitative, for Walcott to turn "their" myths into "our" literature. Some of them, myths and beliefs, we share already.

For a writer to talk of missing something is a device for recovering it; to say something has gone can be to win the past back. The local crop is bananas now, and the sugar mill in Roseau Valley has been abandoned; grass grows between the railroad tracks, yet the crossings still wait for the trolleys to pass, "the old iron stanzas . . . with their fragrant freight." The old chapel remains, where the litany "flows to the molasses accents/of local priests," but we are reminded that once the accents came from Brittany or Alsace-Lorraine.

In a similar way, guilt felt over things left undone, or a privileged fate, or the ineffectualness of one's writing, its irrelevance to one's own people, all can turn into a celebration or a memorial of others, and of what was done or happened. In those days, though he "shared the same unrest as the workers," a poet's "Book of Hours" provided no such present comfort as did the Workers Hymn or even the French priests; yet all the same the poet's gift binds him to the métier of poetry, and the honest laborer, as the Good Book has it, is worthy of his hire.

One thing Walcott now provides is a concentrate of the postcolonial experience, a résumé of Marxism, which is at once weighty, comic, and plangent:

> Demons snarl in a flag and
> smoke coils from a thurifer,
> the breath of the opium dragon
> makes a Lenin of Lucifer.
>
> Countries of cereal grain

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are swept under the shadow
of a scything flag, so the cane
went with the blackbird's arrow.

To carry the story further, we could skip back to some rather less magisterial lines from "The Star-Apple Kingdom," written in 1978, which tell how "one morning the Caribbean was cut up by seven prime ministers," who "sold it at a markup to the conglomerates," who in turn retailed it to the ministers, who then resold it "in ads for the Caribbean Economic Community."

Walcott is honored by the language he writes in, and in turn he adds to its honor. Probably it isn't a good thing for a poet to feel too much "at home" anywhere. Still, first impressions would suggest that Walcott is more at home in "Elsewhere," the second section of the book. That's merely to say that he seems more relaxed, as the calm and clarity of "Eulogy to W. H. Auden" testify, and some of the shorter poems, like the one about the near-suicide who had been told that she had sad, interesting eyes, and "after that, that was it." Ancestral voices cease to nag at him; his preoccupations are for the most part more common, familiar ones: "What we know of evil/is that it will never end," as is said in the poem that (not altogether appositely) gives the collection its title.

A poem ostensibly descriptive of Wales seems curiously stagy, though, as if some other country had superimposed itself on the observer's vision. Other pieces are marked by a diffuseness that Walcott's tight formal control doesn't conceal, and may even foster. But these are minor faults. Perhaps they show that roots count for something, obviously for a lot in Derek Walcott's case, and that nagging can be fruitful, by provoking urgent and complex responses. What can better spur us into song?

D. J. ENRIGHT

D. J. Enright's *Collected Poems* is forthcoming in paperback from Oxford University Press.

LOST IN GREENELAND

The Color of Blood
by Brian Moore

(Dutton, 182 pp., $16.95)

Graham Greene should have no trouble entering the kingdom of heaven. It is on earth that he has much to answer for. Every paperback page-turner whose cover proclaims the coming of a new Existential Thriller ("He carried the war home with him like an infection!"), every fictive burnout in the CIA or the KGB ("Only he could tell the difference as the lines between the superpowers began to blur!"), every backdrop of mist, intrigue, and betrayal on the far side of civilization ("The 'infidels' knew truths that eluded the West!") owes its existence to the place that some wag dubbed Greeneland a half century ago.

Most of these works are ignored by the Master, but occasionally he displays pleasure when a disciple apes the famous trademarks: tongue-and-groove construction, political cynicism, and religious turmoil. John Le Carré has made a career of it, starting with *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* ("The Best Spy Novel I Have Ever Read"—Graham Greene) and continuing through the let's-not-be-beastly-to-the-Palestinians theme of *The Little Drummer Girl*. The steadiest in a long, winding line of acolytes is Brian Moore, whose most appealing books are explorations of feminine psychology and a crisis of faith (*The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*), re-examinations of the past (*The Black Robe*, *The Great Victorian Collection*: "My favorite living novelist . . . treats the novel as a tamer treats a wild beast"—Graham Greene), and the sociology of theology (*Catholics*: "Funny, sad, and very moving"—Graham Greene). Moore's lesser works, "entertainments" in Greene's term, are thrillers written under the name of Michael Bryan. In his spare time the author has written screenplays, among them the moribund *Torn Curtain* for Alfred Hitchcock.

The Color of Blood fuses the high Moore

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and the low. It contains the dependable themes of prelate and thugs, foreign landscape and confusion of realms. This time out the cleric has escalated to cardinal, and the novelist has heightened the tempo. An assassination attempt occurs in the opening scene. Cardinal Bem, of a place very much like Poland, escapes with his life, but his loyal chauffeur is killed. Who would want to gun down the blameless Bem? His is the voice of compromise, attempting to reconcile the workers' movement with the demands of Marxist overlords. As it turns out, the marriage of Solidarity and the state is held at arm's length not only by the rulers but by the intransigent Archbishop Krasnoy. He plans to deliver a speech inciting the population to "an expression of national will," that is, counterrevolution. Red hat orders white hat to expunge all political content from his speech—or else. But Bem loses his authority when three officials appear at his residence and abduct him to a mysterious country house. Are they State Security men? Or are they forces within the Church itself? Bem makes many disheartening discoveries as he escapes into the hinterlands and finds himself at the whim and mercy of commoners with whom he had lost touch years ago.

THIS IS Moore's 15th novel—perhaps one should say screenplay. It shows the practiced hand of a man who knows how to tighten suspense, provide chases and confrontations on cue, scatter ambiguities like bread crumbs along the way, and head toward what paperback publishers like to call a shattering climax.

But is it? Technically the author brings off his scenario. There is a sharply defined protagonist, plus narrow escapes and the classic *soupçons* of violence. But there are also instances of prepackaged cynicism: "Maybe it's true, as that knife grinder said, that the regime stuffs our mouth with sausage to keep us quiet. But what of the other world, the world that Henry Krasnoy calls free? Are the poor any better off there?" And there are unconvincing close-ups of the believer in crisis: " 'I don't know what the pope wants anymore,' the old man said. 'Where is the pope this week? Brazil? Japan? Who knows?' " And perfunctory glimpses of the Church undergoing alteration: "I admit that in the past, our priests have been as anti-Semitic as the rest of our people. But we are trying to change that." How "we" are trying remains offscreen. Perhaps Kurt Waldheim can enlighten us in a sequel.

All this might not have mattered if Moore had developed his plot and people. But *The Color of Blood* is 179 pages—the proper length for what film-makers call a treatment, but far too brief for the subjects introduced and then abruptly dismissed, as if the author was in a hurry to get on to his next project. A pity; Moore used to explore the mental and moral life of his characters en route. And when he played with symbols in the old days, he was never so obvious. In *The Color of Blood* he makes Bem the son of a stableman, and throughout his final days the cardinal cannot find a good place to lay his head. Although it would be unsporting to reveal the finale, no reader should be surprised to find grand tragedy at the fade-out. After all, this is a truly Christian leader who speaks the truth to uncomprehending souls.

As such he makes an appealing figure. One would have liked to see Cardinal Bem in a setting worthy of him, his anguish, and his author. Here Moore, who began so well some 30 years ago with the moving sorrows of a lonely spinster, seems to suffer from a form of literary anorexia. It may be the impatience of age—the author is 66—or the demands of a crowded schedule. Or it may be one more instance of too-close imitation. In that case, Moore has fallen long. *The Tenth Man*, Greene's latest, took just 156 pages to tell its tale.

STEFAN KANFER

Stefan Kanfer, a senior editor at *Time*, is the author most recently of *The International Garage Sale* (W. W. Norton).

TRB, *from page 4*

hopeless competition with low-wage societies is dispatched by Robert Z. Lawrence of Brookings. Lawrence notes that the share of our imports coming from underdeveloped nations is roughly the same now as in 1981, when we were still the world's creditor, and less than half what it was back in 1960. Foreign trade barriers, he notes, also have not grown dramatically since 1981. Our problems are internal, not external.

However, Cassandra's basic math is hard to argue with. Of course, she's been singing the same sad song, with slightly different lyrics, since 1982, as the economy has gone from strength to strength. In the beginning she argued that the huge Reagan deficits would inevitably lead either to inflation or, if the Federal Reserve Board moved to avoid this calamity, a new recession. She failed to account for the internationalization of finance and the willingness of foreigners to fund our wastrel ways. Now she sings that putting off the day of reckoning will only make it worse when it comes.

And that's true. There are only three ways to right the books (which we're going to have to do eventually). We can consume less, invest less, or produce more. Obviously the third option is the best, the second option the worst. But producing more requires investing more too. Peterson figures that at current growth rates, consumption per worker must decline $165 a year for ten years—total $1,650—in order to pay off the furriners and invest for the future. That's his good-news scenario, if we avoid catastrophe.

One bright spot the Cassandras overlook is that, unlike those of other international deadbeats, our debts are denominated in our own currency. That gives us the power to reduce them through the magic of inflation. Reading the various doom-and-gloom scenarios convinces me that this is an option it will be hard to resist. Indeed the $60 billion or so that the Japanese kindly had invested in U.S. Treasury securities by the end of last year has already lost a huge chunk of its value in terms of yen. The cheaper dollar spurs exports and slows imports—reducing our standard of living in the manner prescribed and/or predicted by the Cassandras. The ironic bonus is that it also erodes our debt.

Whether you come down on the side of Pollyanna or Cassandra probably depends more on psychological predisposition than on economic reasoning. I lean toward Cassandra myself.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

his views, so it makes sense that many of his views have evolved since. If Bork read statutes and the Constitution in the way TNR chose to read Bork, you would have had a great case against him. As it is, you made an argument for a broad reading of the Constitution by a selective and slanted reading of the man.

TIMOTHY TAYLOR
Cranbury, New Jersey
continued on page 49

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 48*

BOOSTING NASA

To the editors:

Robert Bazell's "Space Scuttle" (October 12) calls for canceling the space station as a means of "fixing NASA." But this would represent a turning away from space and would lead to an abdication of U.S. civil space leadership. Mr. Bazell's assertion that manufacturing in space was the prime justification for the space station is wrong. A space station exists for three reasons: exploiting the human presence in space, enhancing national pride, and providing an operational base for our evolution into space. His claim that shuttle orbiters, modified to stay in space longer, would be a viable alternative to a permanently staffed research base is nonsense; rather, this approach would exacerbate the science community's problem of inadequate transportation to orbit by reducing the number of shuttle flights available to it.

MARK S. HESS
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

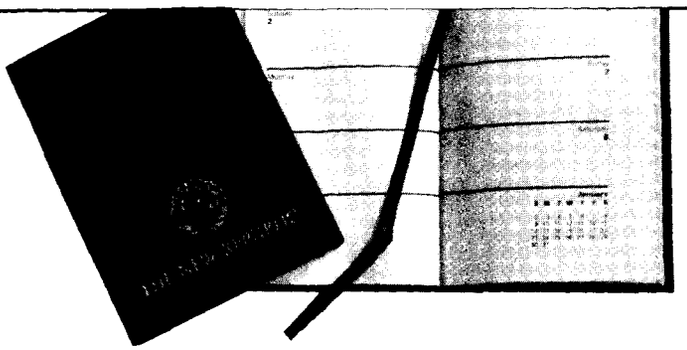
THE SPREAD OF FEAR

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer's "AIDS Hysteria" (October 5) misses the point and the facts. There have been 24,000 deaths to date, but 41,000 people now have AIDS in the U.S. This is expected to climb to 324,000 by 1991. Moreover, it is likely that 2-3 million Americans are seropositive for AIDS. Recent data suggest that 75 percent of those infected will come down with AIDS. In the U.S. alone we are looking at 1.5 million to 2.25 million cases within the next ten years. These numbers are higher than the death rates from cancer or heart disease. Thus, the answer to the tragedy in Arcadia, Florida, is not less education, but more. Ignorance and superstition breed fear and often violence. We may wish the numbers were not so awesome, but the facts must be faced and addressed intelligently.

JEFFREY R. SWARZ
New York, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.



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WASHINGTON DIARIST

"thirtysomething"

I'M A PUSHOVER for shows about me. I like "L.A. Law" because I went to law school. I thought I would like "thirtysomething." Like the protagonists, I have a child who I'm sure will end up in a gutter somewhere if I make one false move. The show is a critical success (most people reviewing television are thirtysomething), touted as this season's "L.A. Law." It's about a high-end couple living, it seems, outside Philadelphia. Subjects covered include money, having it, not having it, and wanting more; babies, having one, and obsessing over it. The husband of the piece has one long-haired friend who hasn't sold out and one short-haired friend who has. The wife has two single friends, successful but missing something because they don't have a child to obsess over. Various totems of success are present—the Oriental rugs, the patchwork quilts, the renovated house with lots of exposed wood, and the Jeep for all that rough driving around Philadelphia.

BUT "THIRTYSOMETHING" lacks the fantasy element so central to the success of "L.A. Law." There are no lawyers practicing in small firms with interesting work, fat bonuses, and intraoffice romance. But who would watch a program about a bunch of lawyers at Arnold & Porter splitting hairs over Title VII of the Urban Mass Transit Act? What "thirtysomething" needs is people like me—better looking and funnier, of course—who have a more entertaining way of coping with the fear of a toddler drowning in one-and-a-half inches of toilet water than nipping out to the local hardware store to buy a $3.99 latch.

BEING DEAD EARNEST is one flaw; a retrogressive view of women another. The program is honest about the dilemma facing working couples. Leaving a child for most of his waking hours with a person who wouldn't accept such a low-status, low-paying, no benefits, dead-end job as baby-sitting if a better job were a possibility is not ideal. But why assume Mom should therefore stay home? (We don't know what Mom used to do, but it's clear she did something and misses it.) Here's a guy who talks like the New Father but acts like Robert Young. He runs his own advertising agency. Couldn't he set up a nursery? He's in charge. Or at least toy with the idea of working part time at home. Then he could make sure the baby sitter doesn't plop junior in front of the TV all day. Instead, he blames his wife for scrutinizing the labor pool too closely. He gets gratitude all around when he gets up one morning with the baby and lets his wife sleep in.

OF COURSE, "thirtysomething" is only a television show, pop culture lagging behind real life. I know the New Father really exists. Just last week, one was going on about how he had watched the baby all afternoon *and* fixed dinner. Turns out he had packed the three-month-old in a Snuggli, gone off to Pearson's Liquor to buy a case of wine, and lit the grill.

WASHINGTON LOVES to get a leg up on New York. On September 28 the new Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Asian and Near Eastern Art, the first addition to the Smithsonian in a decade, opened on the Mall. Well, not exactly on the Mall. Under it. Not even $70 million can buy a plot of land at sea level between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. By rights, the gallery should be aboveground at the Metropolitan Museum in Manhattan. But when the Met wouldn't promise to name a wing after Sackler, the New York philanthropist withdrew his collection. For a $4 million endowment and the largest private collection of Orientalia in the country, former Smithsonian secretary S. Dillon Ripley saw his way clear to slap Sackler's name on the building, and Washington got its museum. Washington-envy may be why one New York critic called the complex plunging three stories down, which also includes the National Museum of African Art, a $73.2 million hole in the ground.

THEY HAVEN'T STARTED building houses underground in Washington's overheated real estate market, but they're coming close. The newest scam is to buy a house on a deep lot, live in the house, get an easy-to-come-by zoning variance, and develop the other lot. In my close-in neighborhood, one of the last to be discovered in Washington, there are now ten houses where once there were five. The old modest three-bedroom colonials have been renovated to fare-thee-well, brick giving way to glass wherever possible, with decks the size of aircraft carriers. The new houses are massive five-bedroom affairs, with marble encrusted bathrooms and the obligatory gourmet kitchen. Of course, you have to give up something: first your back yard, then your trees, and later your privacy. Look up from your morning paper and make eye contact with the guy in slippers at the next table, I mean next house. Soon, it will feel just like New York.

FOR MANY YEARS, I have been playing mediocre tennis, with all the wild serves and missed lobs that suggests. Some of my coping strategies—holding the racket like a baseball bat to swat at backhands and squeezing my eyes shut at the net—meant I could only play with close friends of the family. This summer, I decided to end all that. I went to tennis camp. Not a wimpy tennis camp where you have a choice between having high tea in the grand lobby of the Boca Raton Hotel & Racket Club or showing up for the afternoon session on lobbing strategy on Court Three, but boot camp for the tennis-impaired, where you sleep in a dormitory and hope that the Coke from the vending machine is cold. Now I play tennis like a maniac. None of this social mixed-doubles stuff, where some guy mutters Bobby Riggs's advice to Billy Jean King "to stand in the alley and don't hit anything that doesn't hit you first." In fact, no doubles. Singles, where I can put to use the lethal overhead smash and searing backhand I left my zip code and soft bed to acquire, is my game now. It was a passing shot to my new improved backhand that ended my brilliant career. I ran, I stretched, I missed and tore most of the ligaments that matter in my right foot. The doctors say I'll walk again. The fat bandage and orthopedic boot is not a good look. If I survive to go to tennis camp again, I won't be so quick to cut off the thirtysomething's favorite topic, knee braces and ankle supports. Doubles, anyone?

M. B. C.

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